The Rigveda

THE EARLIEST RELIGIOUS POETRY OF INDIA

Translated by
Stephanie W. Jamison
and
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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Published in the United States of America by
Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Vedas. Rgveda. English.
The Rigveda: the earliest religious poetry of India / Translated by
Stephanie W. Jamison and Joel P. Brereton.
pages cm. — (South Asia research)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Translated from Vedic Sanskrit.
ISBN 978–0–19–517918–7 (hardcover : alk. paper) — ISBN 978–0–19–972078–1 (ebook)
I. Jamison, Stephanie W., 1948– II. Brereton, Joel P., 1948– III. Title.
BL1112.52.E53 2013
294.5'921204521—dc23
2013019055

ISBN 9780199370184 (Set ISBN)
ISBN 9780195179187 (Volume 1)
ISBN 9780199363780 (Volume 2)
ISBN 9780199363797 (Volume 3)

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

Marianne Oost-1554

Volume II

V

Maṇḍala V

Only fourteen of the eighty-seven hymns of the maṇḍala are attributed or alternately attributed to Atri himself (V.27, 37–43, 76–77, 83–86). The majority of the hymns were composed by Ātreyas, descendants of Atri, thirty-six of whom are mentioned by the Anukramaṇī in Maṇḍala V. In the Anukramaṇī's reckoning, only three of the Ātreyas—Vasuśruta (3–6), Sutambhara (11–14), and Śyāvāśva (52–59, 81–82)—composed more than one or two hymns, and only Atri himself, Śyāvāśva, and Avasyu Ātreya (31, 75) provided hymns to more than one deity or set of deities in this book. Unlike, for example, Maṇḍala III, the Viśvāmitra Family Book, the eponymous poet is thus not the major poet of Maṇḍala V. Rather, Atri is principally an ancestor, perhaps a fairly distant one, of a large family of poets. Atri appears as a figure in hymns by Ātreyas (2, 7, 15, 73, 74, 78) and in one hymn of his own (40), sometimes in reference to narratives associated with him, such as his rescue by the Aśvins (73.6, 78.4) or Atri's restoration of the sun (40.6–8). In final verses poets occasionally refer to themselves and their people as "Atris" (22.4, 39.5, 40.9, 67.5)—a plural that only occurs in the Vth Maṇḍala. In addition to Atri and Ātreyas, there are other poets from families connected to the Atris in some way. Among them are Āṅgirasa poets, to whom two hymns (15, 35) are attributed. The Āṅgirasa poets are one of the two dominant families in VIII, which also contains seven hymns ascribed to Ātreya poets (or in the case of VIII.91, a female [Ātreyī] poet). The presence of Āṅgirasa poets in V and of Ātreya poets in VIII points to the close connection between Atri poets and the Kāṇvas and Āṅgirasas. Geographically, the Atris ranged broadly from the rivers in the northwest, including the Kabul (Kubhā) and Kurram (Krumu) rivers, extending to the Yamunā in the east. Strikingly, it is the same poet, Śyāvāśva, who mentions rivers in the northwest (53.9) and the Yamunā (52.17).

The Atris and their associates address a broader range of deities in their hymns than do many of the other poetic families. The distribution is as follows: Agni (1–28), Indra (29–40), the All Gods (41–51), the Maruts (52–61), Mitra and Varuṇa (62–72), the Aśvins (73–78), Dawn (79–80), Savitar (81–82), Parjanya (83), Earth (84), Varuṇa (85), Indra and Agni (86), and the Maruts (87). The last hymn, which returns to the Maruts, is an addition to the original collection and unusual in a number of respects. Metrically it is in a long lyric meter, and thematically it features an unusual pairing of the Maruts with Viṣṇu.

The Atri Maṇḍala contains a noteworthy collection of hymns to the All Gods (41–51). A number of these feature riddles and verbal play, but none is as challenging as V.44, which Geldner called the most difficult hymn in the Ṛgveda. The hymn does not name the god or gods it praises, but the very last verse mentions Agni and Soma, leaving the hearer to divine what the rest of the hymn is about. Complicating that task are lexical, syntactic, and morphological puzzles, ellipses without obvious resolution, and, above all, a likely dual reference that points to the mystery at the heart of the hymn.

The Marut cycle attributed to Śyāvāśva Ātreya (52–61) contains the longest sequence of hymns dedicated to these gods in the Ṛgveda and is a remarkably exciting and satisfying achievement. Other hymns of note include two hymns to gods of the natural world, V.80 to Dawn and V.83 to Parjanya, the Thunderstorm. The first is the most famous and certainly one of the most beautiful of the hymns to Dawn in the Ṛgveda, famed for its sensual portrayal of Dawn as a beautiful woman revealing herself to men. The latter is an energetic picture of the storm god, roaring loudly and flooding the earth. The rains are a constant theme in a number of the strongest hymns in this collection, including V.54, which vividly describes the Maruts and the storms they bring, and V.63, which rumbles repeated sounds in its praise of Mitra and Varuṇa as masters of the monsoons. The single hymn to Varuṇa in this collection, V.85, presents both a grand vision of the god as the creator of the world and a more intimate one of Varuṇa as a god who can forgive offenses and free people from them. In general, the Atri poets were at their best in describing natural phenomena, especially thunderstorms, which they both fervently desire and fear because of their power.

V.1 (355) Agni

Budha Ātreya and Gaviṣṭhira Ātreya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn describes the kindling and birth of Agni in the morning rite. In the middle section of the hymn, the poet links verses by repeating an image from the second hemistich in the opening hemistich of the next verse. So in 4d and 5a Agni as a horse is born "at the beginning of days," although in verse 4 this may be Agni as the sun, while in verse 5 Agni is clearly the sacrificial fire. Note the difference in color: the horse is "gleaming" or "white" in verse 4, but "ruddy" in verse 5. The poet almost repeats 5d in 6a, except that he has shifted the tense in 6d to a more distant past indicating the passage of time between the verses. More loosely, in 6c Agni is a sage poet (*kaví*) and in 7a an "inspired" poet (*vípra*). In 7d the priests "groom" (*mṛjanti*) Agni, imagined as a horse, and in 8a "fit to be groomed, he is groomed" (*mārjālyò mṛjyate*). In 8d Agni is ahead (*prá √as*) of other fires and in 9a he goes ahead (*prá √i*) of other sacrificers.

Though a common metaphor, the image of Agni as a horse or a chariot-driver is treated with originality. Most strikingly, in verse 3, instead of the priests awakening Agni, Agni awakens the hymn, "the bridle" (*raśanā́*) of the horse that pulls the chariot, the sacrifice itself, while the dakṣiṇā, the sacrificial reward to the priests, is the horse. The end of the verse shifts to the metaphor of Agni as a growing child. The word for "tongues" of flame, *juhū́*, can also mean a sacrificial ladle, and this ambiguity is the basis for the ellipsis of the noun.

1. Agni has awakened by the kindling wood of the peoples in response to Dawn, approaching like a milk-cow.
   Like young (birds) rising toward a branch, his radiant beams leap forth to heaven's vault.
2. The Hotar has awakened to sacrifice to the gods. Benevolent Agni has stood tall in the early morning.
   As he is kindled, his brightening face has become visible. The great god has become free from darkness.
3. When he has awakened the bridle [=the hymn] of the (priestly) troop, blazing Agni is anointed with blazing cows [=milk].
   Then Reward is harnessed, racing toward the prize. Tall, with his tongues he suckled upon her [=the Ladle], who is stretched out.
4. Toward Agni the thoughts of those seeking the gods converge, like eyes upon the sun.
   When Dawn and Night, differing in color, give birth to him, the gleaming prizewinning steed is born at the beginning of days.
5. Since the thoroughbred has been born at the beginning of days—the ruddy one has been laid upon the laid wood—
   laying seven treasures in every house, Agni has taken his seat as the Hotar, the superior sacrificer.
6. Agni took his seat as the Hotar, the superior sacrificer, in the lap of his mother, in the wide, sweet-smelling place [=the altar]—
   he, the young poet, outstanding among many, truth-possessing, the maintainer of the peoples, and kindled in their midst.
7. Now they summon forth this inspired one bringing success in the rites, Agni the Hotar, with their acts of reverence.
   They groom with ghee their own prizewinning steed, who stretches through the two world-halves by truth.
8. Fit to be groomed, he is groomed in his own (house) as master of the house, praised by poets, our kind guest.
   A bull of a thousand horns and having its power, o Agni, you are ahead of all the other (fires) by your strength.
9. At once, Agni, you go ahead beyond the other (sacrificers), for him to whom you have become manifest as the most beloved,
   as one to be summoned, to be marveled at, far radiant, the dear guest of the clans of the sons of Manu.

10. To you, o youngest Agni, the peoples bring tribute from near and far.
    Attend to the favor of the most fortunate (sacrificer)! Lofty and great is your propitious shelter, o Agni.
11. Today mount your radiant chariot, o radiant Agni, that is shared with the (gods), fit recipients of sacrifice.
    Knowing the paths, convey the gods here across the wide midspace for them to consume the offerings.
12. We have spoken an extolling speech to the wise poet, the bull-strong bull.
    With reverence Gaviṣṭhira has rested his praise song in Agni, as if resting the wide-spreading golden disk in heaven.

V.2 (356) Agni

Kumāra Ātreya or Vṛśa Jāna or both
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 12

Geldner provides a long introduction to this hymn and concludes that it deals with the disappearance of the fire-god Agni as if he were a household or ritual fire that has suddenly gone out or a newly churned or kindled fire that does not emerge. More specifically, we suggest, it may have been composed as a prāyaścitti or expiation for a sacrificial fire that has gone out as offerings were poured into it and to accompany a rite of restoring the fire.

In verses 1–2 the hidden child is Agni. The young mother (vs. 1) and wet nurse (vs. 2) could be the firewood (*samídh* fem.) that keeps the fire hidden, and the chief wife, the *máhiṣī*, who gave birth to Agni, may be a fire-churning stick (*aráṇī* fem.). Yet in verse 1 the poet assures himself that Agni will emerge and take his ritual place to the east as he usually does. The poet sees Agni far away from his place in the rite (vss. 3–4), but who is this Agni? Is he other fires, or, as we think more likely, the sun, moving from the east toward the west? Verse 5 offers syntactic challenges—the masculine *yéṣām* and the sense of *ná . . . cid*—but the cattle or bulls of Agni that it mentions may be the flames (*arká* or *arcí* masc.?) that the poets hopes the god will drive to the sacrificial place. Agni should find release from the powers who would deny the fire to the poet and his peoples (vs. 6), and thus should release the sacrificers from whatever limits them (vs. 7). However, Agni has departed the sacrificial place in anger—a fact that one of the gods, perhaps Indra or Varuṇa or conceivably even Agni himself, has made plain. But Indra knows where Agni is and has guided the sacrificers so that they may recover him (vs. 8). Ultimately, nothing can keep Agni from the sacrificers, as the presence of Agni as the sun in heaven shows (vss. 9–10), and he will honor the command of the gods to help the sacrificer (vs. 12).

Geldner also summarizes a narrative later connected to this hymn, mentioned in Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa XIII 3.12, Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa III 94, Bṛhaddevatā V 12–23 and given also by Sāyaṇa. According to the version of the Bṛhaddevatā, King Tryaruṇa was riding in a chariot driven by his purohita Vṛśa Jāna. A brahmin boy was killed by the chariot, and the king blamed the purohita. Vṛśa brought the boy back to life, but then stormed away in anger because of the king's accusation. When the purohita departed, however, so did the fury of the king's sacrificial fire and with it the ability of the fire to cook the oblations. Therefore the king went to Vṛśa and persuaded him to return as his purohita and to restore the fire's fury. When he came back, Vṛśa found that a Piśācī woman in the king's house had taken the fury of the king's fire. But by reciting V.2.9 Vṛśa caused the fury to return and to burn the Piśācī woman. As Geldner rightly concludes, this story draws on elements of the hymn, but the hymn is surely not based on it.

1. In secret the young mother carries the child who is swaddled; she does not give him to his father.
   His face is not one that changes (its face): the peoples see it in front, set down in the circle of spokes.
2. Young woman, who is this child whom you carry as his wet nurse? The chief wife has given birth to him,
   for the embryo grew strong through many autumns, and I saw him (newly) born, when his mother bore him.
3. I saw him with golden teeth and flaming color far away from his homeland, showing the measure of his weapons,
   as I gave to him my immortal (soma) without impurity. What can those without Indra, without recitations, do to me?
4. I saw him moving from his homeland into the distance, going in beauty in many ways like a herd (moving) together.
   They did not keep hold of him. Because he has been born, the young women become gray.
5. Who will keep my little young blood separate from the cattle, which have never had a stranger as their herdsman?
   They who have kept hold of him, let them release him. The watchful one will drive the animals to us.
6. Hostilities have set down the king of dwellings, the dwelling place of the peoples, among mortals.
   Let the formulations of Atri release him. Let them who scorn become those to be scorned.
7. You loosed even Śunaḥśepa, who was bound, from his thousand (bonds), from the sacrificial post, since he exhausted himself (in sacrifice).
   So unloose the fetters from us, o Agni, watchful Hotar, after having taken your seat here.
8. Because, becoming angry, you had gone from me, the protector of the commandments of the gods announced (that) to me.
   Because the knowing Indra has kept you in his sights, instructed by him have I come here, o Agni.

9. Agni radiates in all directions with a lofty light. He makes visible all things by his greatness.
   He overpowers ungodly guiles and those of evil ways. He sharpens his horns to pierce through the demonic.
10. And in heaven let there be the roars of Agni with their sharp weapons to smash the demonic.
    Even in his elation his (furious) radiance breaks forth. Ungodly evasions will not hinder him.
11. This praise song for you, o you who are powerfully born, have I, the inspired poet, fashioned as a clever artisan (fashions) a chariot.
    If, Agni, you will gladly receive that very (song), o god, thereby we would win the waters together with the sun.
12. "The bull of powerful neck, having become full-grown, will drive together unchallenged the possessions of the stranger,"
    thus the immortals have spoken to this Agni here. He will offer protection to Manu bearing ritual grass; he will offer protection to Manu bearing offerings.

V.3 (357) Agni

Vasuśruta Ātreya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn opens with identifications of Agni with the Ādityas—Varuṇa and Mitra in verse 1 and Aryaman and Mitra in verse 2. The reason for these identifications is not immediately clear, and indeed in various ways the poet also marshals the presence of other gods: Indra in verse 1, the Maruts, Viṣṇu, and Rudra in verse 3, and all the gods again in verse 1. After invoking the presence of the gods, the poet then describes the installation of the sacrificial fire (vss. 4–5). In verses 6–7 he asks that the presence of the sacrificial fire also mark the presence of Agni's help against those who are offending against his people and himself. He mentions evil speech (vs. 7) and curses brought against its speaker (vss. 7, 12) and also against thieves and cheats (vs. 11) threatening him. He therefore asks the god for rescue (vs. 9). This concern explains the prominence of the Ādityas at the beginning of the hymn, since they are the gods who oversee social relations among humans and therefore can protect against people who seek to harm others.

1. You, o Agni, are Varuṇa when you are born. You become Mitra when you are kindled.
   In you are the all the gods, o son of strength. You are Indra for the pious mortal.
2. You become Aryaman when you belong to young girls (at marriage). You bear a secret name, o you of independent will.
   They anoint (you as) Mitra with cows [=milk/butter], like a well-established (ally), when you make the lord and lady of the household to be of one mind.
3. For your splendor the Maruts groomed themselves, o Rudra, when you came to beloved, shimmering birth.
   The track of Viṣṇu that was set down as the highest, by that you protect the secret name of the cows.
4. By the splendor of you (who are lovely to see), the gods are lovely to see, o god. Receiving many things for themselves, they serve the immortal one.
   The fire-priests have seated Agni as the Hotar of Manu, giving homage to him as the "Recitation of Āyu."
5. No ancient Hotar was a better sacrificer than you, o Agni. There is no one higher in poetic arts, o you of independent will.
   One belonging to the clan of which you will become a guest will vanquish mortals through the sacrifice, o god.
6. Helped by you, o Agni, we would vanquish mortals—we, striving after goods and awakening with our offering;
   we, in the competition and in the ritual distributions of the days; we, with our wealth, o son of strength.
7. The one who will bring offense or blame against us—all of you: set evil upon him, the speaker of evil.
   O watchful Agni, smash this curse (of him) who harms us with duplicity.
8. At the dawning of this (dawn), o god, the ancients, making you their messenger, offered you sacrifice with oblations,
   when, o Agni, you speed amid the gathering of riches as the god being kindled by mortals and by the good (gods).
9. Fight! since you know how. Rescue your father [=the priest], who considers himself your son, o son of strength!
   Watchful one, when will you look toward us? O Agni, when will you, perceiving the truth, take your place?
10. Your father sets many names (on you) as he sings praises, good one, if you will find pleasure in this.
    Desiring this, Agni will gain (divine) favor (for us) with the strength of a god, having become full grown, will he not?
11. Certainly, o youngest Agni, carry the singer beyond all difficulties.
    Thieves have appeared and cheating peoples. Devious ones of unknown intention have come.
12. These pleas have come toward you, or rather this very offense has been spoken to (you), the good one.
    Having become full grown, this Agni here will not betray us to the curse nor to him doing harm.

V.4 (358) Agni

Vasuśruta Ātreya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

In this hymn the poet sets forth what we—the poet and the other sacrificers—will do and receive within the frame of what Agni, typically addressed in the 2nd person, will accomplish. The poet draws attention to "we" and "you" by fronting the personal pronouns and using their non-enclitic forms. He announces this strategy in the first verse, which begins with *tvā́m* "you," and then the following verses largely describe Agni as the sacrificial fire, who conveys the oblations to the gods (vs. 2) and the gods to the oblations (vs. 4). Verses 5 and especially 6, the omphalos verse, mark a thematic movement from the sacrificial fire that serves the gods to the fire that mortals serve and that serves mortals. In verse 7 the first word of each pāda and in verse 8 the first word of each hemistich is "we" or "us." Enclitic and non-enclitic forms of the 1st-person plural pronoun also occur in verses 9 and 10, and in verse 10 the poet personalizes the verse even more deeply by using 1st-person singular verbs: *jóhavīmi* "I repeatedly invoke" and *aśyām* "may I attain." The last verse abandons the 1st person altogether, instead referring to the recipient of Agni's favor as "he," and with *tvám* "you" in the first pāda, it returns to the initial focus on Agni.

1. In you, o Agni, goods-lord of goods, I find elation at the rites, o king.
   Through you we would win victory's prize, racing to the prize. We would prevail against the battle-charges of mortals.
2. Conveying our oblations, unaging Agni is our father, the one far-reaching, far-radiant, and lovely to see among us.
   Illuminate fully the refreshments of a well-run household. Mete out full measures of fame in our direction.
3. The poet of the clans, the clanlord of the (clans) of the sons of Manu, blazing, purifying, ghee-backed Agni—
   him have you all installed as the Hotar knowing all things. He will win desirable rewards among the gods.
4. Take pleasure, o Agni, along with the libation, aligning with the rays of the sun.
   Take pleasure in our kindling wood, o Jātavedas, and convey the gods here to eat the oblations.
5. As the pleasing lord of the house and the guest in the home, journey to this our sacrifice since you are the knowing one.
   Having smashed to pieces all attacks, o Agni, bring here the sustenance of those challenging us.
6. With your weapon send the Dasyu into hiding, while creating vigor for your own body,
   and thus protect us when the prize is at stake, o Agni, best of men, since you bring the gods safely across, o child of strength.

7. *We* would do you honor, o Agni, with our recitations; we, with our oblations, o pure one of auspicious flame.
   For us speed wealth that fulfills all wishes; for us grant all goods.
8. Take pleasure in *our* rite, o Agni, son of strength with three abodes, and in our oblation.
   May we be those acting rightly toward the gods. Protect us by your shelter with its three defenses.
9. Carry us across all difficult depths and difficult ways, o Jātavedas, as if across a river by a boat.
   O Agni, being sung with reverence as if by Atri, become the helper of *our* bodies.
10. Thinking with a simple heart, I, a mortal, who repeatedly invoke you, an immortal—
    among us grant glory, o Jātavedas. May I attain immortality through offspring, o Agni.
11. For whom you will make a wide, comfortable place, o Jātavedas, since he acts rightly toward you, o Agni,
    he will attain a wealth of horses, sons, heroes, and cattle for his well-being.

V.5 (359) Āprī

Vasuśruta Ātreya
11 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn follows the usual sequence of the Āprī litany, although it omits the normal explicit reference to the barhis, the ritual grass, in verse 4. Until the very end of the hymn, the poet uses the imperative except in verse 2, which has the subjunctive, and in verse 6, in which he announces that he is beseeching Evening and Dawn but does not directly state what he wishes to occur. However, he implies a request for strength by calling the two deities *vayovṛ́dh* "increasing vigor." The last verse, however, shows a decided shift that is signaled by the complete absence of a verb. Through the repetition of the ritual call *svā́hā*, the verse marks the moment at which the priest makes the offering that should culminate or accomplish all the things urged before.

1. To the well-*kindled* flame offer sharp ghee,
   to Agni Jātavedas.
2. The undeceivable *Narāśaṃsa* will sweeten this sacrifice,
   for he is the poet with honey in his hands.
3. When *invoked*, o Agni, convey here dear shimmering Indra
   with his easy running chariots, to help us.
4. Having the softness of wool, spread widely, (o *ritual grass*): the chants have cried out to you.
   Be here to win gain for us, beautiful one.

5. Divine *doors*, gape open, giving easy access to help us.
   Fill the sacrifice, further and further.
6. The two of beautiful appearance, increasing vigor, the young mothers of truth,
   Evening and Dawn—them we beseech.
7. On the wind's flight let the two *divine Hotars* of Manu, being invoked, come to this our sacrifice.
8. Iḍā, Sarasvatī, and Mahī, the three *goddesses* who are joy itself—
   let them, unfailing, sit upon the ritual grass.
9. *Tvaṣṭar*, come here as the kind one, far-ranging in the prosperity (you bring), and in your own person
   help us at every sacrifice.
10. Where you know, o *Lord of the Forest*, to be the hidden names of the gods, there make our oblations go.
11. *Svāhā* to Agni and to Varuṇa, *svāhā* to Indra and to the Maruts,
    svāhā to the gods—the offering!

V.6 (360) Agni

Vasuśruta Ātreya
10 verses: paṅkti

The hymn is dominated by references to prizewinning horses. In verse 3 Agni gives the prizewinner, which may be Agni himself. In pāda d of the verse, therefore, the one who "journeys to what is valued" is Agni both as a god retrieving the reward for the sacrificers and as a metaphoric horse racing to the prize. Again in verse 7 Agni's flames are horses and the prize toward which they strive is cattle, first mentioned in verse 1, along with horses. Allusion to horses is indirect in verse 10, but in 10ab the priests "guide" Agni—assuming with Geldner and Renou that *ajuryamur* is haplology for *ajuryáṃ yamur*—as they might guide a horse. Then in d they hope for an "abundance of heroes and *this* abundance of swift horses." There are various possible explanations for why the poet speaks of *tyád* "this" abundance. One is that there is a comparison between the horses they hope to gain and Agni's flames imagined as horses. If so, then "this abundance" would mean an abundance of horses equivalent to the present abundance of flames.

1. I think of Agni, who is the good one, to whom milk-cows go home,
   swift chargers (go) home, and our own prizewinners (go) home.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
2. He is Agni, who is sung as the good one, whom the milk-cows approach together,
   the fast-running chargers (approach) together, and well-born patrons (approach) together.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.

3. Since Agni, who belongs to all domains, gives the prizewinner [=Agni?] to the clan,
   (since) Agni (gives the prizewinner) that is very ready for wealth, when pleased, he journeys to what is valued.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
4. Agni, here would we kindle your brilliant and unaging (flame), o god,
   so that this your kindling stick, admired more, will shine in heaven.
   – Bring here refreshment for the praise singers.
5. Agni, for you the offering is poured here, accompanied by our verse, o lord of the glistening flame,
   beautifully shimmering, wondrous clanlord, and conveyor of oblations.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
6. And these fires are at the forefront among fires. They foster everything of value.
   They hasten it; they speed it; they drive it onward in proper order.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
7. These flames of yours, o Agni, are greatly arrogant prizewinners,
   which, by the soaring of their hooves, dart toward the double enclosures of the cows.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
8. Agni, bring the new ones here to us, the praise singers—(those) refreshments and good settlements.
   We would be those who have recited verses, those having you as our messenger in every house.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
9. O you who are beautifully shimmering, you make the two spoonsful of melted butter ready within your mouth,
   and so you should fill us (with plenty) at our hymns, o lord of vast power.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
10. Thus they *have guided the *unaging Agni with songs and sacrifices in proper order.
    He will grant to us an abundance of heroes and this abundance of swift horses.
    – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.

V.7 (361) Agni

Iṣa Ātreya
10 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 10

At the beginning (vss. 1–3) the poet repeats the word *sám* "together" alone or in compounds. The first pāda draws particular attention to the word with its repetition

of *sa(m)*: ***sákhāyaḥ sám*** *vaḥ* ***samyáñcam***. In the middle verses (4, 5, 7, 8) *sám* is echoed by the particle *smā́/sma* "again," or more exactly "as always." The last verse (10) is in a different meter, and, marked by its opening *íti* "with these words," it stands outside of the main body of the poem. The real concluding verse, therefore, is verse 9, in which *sám* is echoed again, this time by *śám* "luck." The one verse in which neither *sám* nor one of its echo words occurs (6) is actually a dependent clause that is completed by verses 7–8. The sound repetitions thematically link the union (*sám*) of both the priests and the offerings, the return of Agni (*sma/smā*), and finally the good luck (*śám*) that the sacrifice will bring to Agni and the benefit that Agni will bring to both gods and humans.

As mentioned above, the poet extends a statement across three verses (6–8). This highly unusual construction marks the climax of the hymn, which describes the moment when Agni "streams forth." Indeed, the extended statement even iconically suggests the extension of the sacrificial fire as it creeps throughout the wood. However, this strategy creates challenging syntax: verse 6 is a relative clause describing Agni, verse 7 a causal clause that explains how it is that Agni is a homeland for Āyu and his descendants, and verse 8 concludes with the appearance of Agni.

Finally, one philological explanation: in verse 7 we read *ákṣitam* rather than *ā́kṣitam* with the Padapāṭha.

1. O companions, (unite) together your united refreshment and praise to Agni,
   to the highest (dweller) of the dwellings, to the child of nourishment endowed with strength,
2. At the encounter together with whom, wherever it be, delighting men [=priests] (unite) in the session of men [=the sacrifice]
   and whom even the worthy (gods) kindle and our folk bring to birth.
3. When we get together the refreshments and together the oblations of the sons of Manu,
   he for his part has taken the rein of truth with the vast power of his brilliance.
4. Again he makes a beacon here, even during the night, for him who is far away,
   when he, the pure one, again diminishes the lords of the forest (into ash), himself unaging.
5. In whose service they again pour down their sweat upon his paths,
   they have mounted this land of his own noble birth like the backs (of horses).
6. The much coveted one whom the mortal finds in order that he suckle everyone [=both gods and mortals],
   (the one who is) the sweetening of foods and also the homeland for Āyu,
7. Because like a mower, he again mows the uninhabitable wasteland like a grazing animal—

   he of golden beard and blazing teeth, the craftsman whose might is never blunted—
8. Him his mother bore bearing easily, when she successfully obtained the good fortune (of Agni's birth),
   (for the sacrificer), for whom, as for Atri, blazing (Agni) again streams forth like an axe.
9. (For the sacrificer), who is luck for you so that you suckle (everyone), o Agni, o you having butter as your soma-drink,
   establish brilliance and fame here among these mortals, (establish) insight here.
10. With just these words, I take the battle-fury of Adhrij, the (sacrificial) animal given by you.
    Then, o Agni, Atri should overpower the Dasyus, who never give; Iṣa should overpower men [=other sacrificers].

V.8 (362) Agni

Iṣa Ātreya
7 verses: jagatī

The poet begins each verse with the object phrase *tvā́m agne* "you, o Agni," except verse 5, which subtly breaks the pattern by beginning *tvám agne*, with the nominative subject pronoun instead of the accusative. Thematically the hymn emphasizes the roles of Agni as the fire of the household, of the clan, and of the clans collectively. The poet remembers that the ancestors kindled Agni (vss. 1–2), that their descendants, the present clans, continue to do so now (vs. 3), and that through Agni they gain sustenance (vs. 5).

1. You, o Agni, did the truth-seekers kindle—the ancients (kindled) the ancient one—for your help, o you made with strength,
   (you) the much-glittering, all-nurturing one worthy of the sacrifice, the desirable master of the household, lord of the house.
2. You, o Agni, did they seat as the first guest of the clan, as the lord of the house with blazing hair,
   with lofty beacon and many forms, winning back the stakes, offering good protection and good help, striving to bring (mortals) to old age.
3. You, o Agni, do the clans of Manu's sons invoke as the one knowing priestly offices, discriminating, and best granting treasures,
   being in hiding yet visible to all, o you who bring good fortune, resounding mightily, sacrificing well, and having ghee as your splendor.
4. You, o Agni, the steadfast one, have we always approached with homage, singing with our songs.

Being kindled, find pleasure in our (songs), o Aṅgiras—(you) a god (in those) of a mortal—with a glorious (fire?), with your bright lights.

5. You, o Agni, with your many forms establish vitality for every clan in your ancient way, o you much praised.
   By your strength you rule over many foods. When you have flared, that flare of yours is not to be challenged.
6. You, o Agni, o youngest one, did the gods make their messenger, the conveyor of the oblations, when you were kindled.
   They have established you of wide expanse, having your birthplace in ghee, anointed (with ghee), as the flaring eye that propels thought.
7. You, o Agni, anointed with ghee from of old, have those seeking your favor kindled with good kindling.
   Having become fully grown and increased by the plants, you spread over the earthly expanses.

V.9 (363) Agni

Gaya Ātreya
7 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

The poet has taken special pains to link one verse to the next. Verses 2–3 form a single statement with two relative clauses joined by the marked conjunction *utá*. Verses 3–4 both begin with the same words *utá sma* "And . . . again," and verse 5 also begins with a similar and conjunctive *ádha sma* "Then . . . again." The final pāda also begins with *utá,* but sounds almost like an afterthought. Its seeming superfluity calls attention to it as an addition and thereby also to the serial concatenation across the hymn's verses.

Less clear is the purpose that such concatenation serves. One possibility is that this structure is a verbal icon of various kinds of ritual strings. Thus it might reflect the poet's request in the first verse that Agni "convey our oblations in proper order." That is, the connection of verses one to another might anticipate the connected sequence of offerings made into the fire. Or it might reflect the convergences of sacrifices, sacrificial rewards, and sacrificial participants at the rite, all mentioned in verse 2, or the union of Agni's flames, amplified by the image of metals smelted together in verse 5. Or it might even indicate the alliance between gods and humans signified by the appearance of Agni as Mitra, the god of alliances, in verse 6. Or all of the above.

1. You, Agni, a god, do mortals summon, bearing offerings.
   I think you to be Jātavedas: convey our oblations in proper order.
2. Agni is the Hotar of the dwelling rich in gifts, in which the ritual grass is twisted,
   upon whom sacrifices converge and the prizes and seekers of fame (converge);

3. And to whom the churning stick has again given birth like a new calf—
   Agni, the supporter of the clans of the sons of Manu, performing good rites.
4. And like a son of twisting (snakes) you are again hard to grasp,
   you, who are the consumer of much wood, o Agni, like a grazing animal in a pasture (consuming much grass).
5. Then he whose smoky flames all together join together—
   when Trita in heaven blows upon him like a blower [=smelter] (of metals), he becomes sharp as if at the blowing (of bellows).
6. By your help, o Agni, and through my proclamations of (Agni as) Mitra, would I—
   would *we* cross over difficulties of mortals, as those repelling hatred do.
7. Let our men (be) dominant over wealth, o Agni. Bring that here, o strong one!
   He makes us dwell in peace; he makes us thrive; he comes in order (for us) to gain the prize of victory. And let him be present to strengthen us in battles.

V.10 (364) Agni

Gaya Ātreya
7 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4, 7

Oldenberg (1897: 390) remarks that this hymn "seems to stand parallel with" the preceding hymn, which is attributed to the same poet. The hymn comprises a direct and energetic plea for wealth both for those chanting praise songs and for their patrons, their *sūríṣ*, explicitly mentioned in verses 3 and 6. In verse 3 it is not clear whether "patrons" and "men" refer to patrons and priests or whether "men" is in apposition to patrons, and then in verse 4, whether those beautifying the songs are patrons or priests or both. If both, which we think most likely, then the "gifts of horses" could refer to actual horses that patrons bring and metaphoric horses, the songs that priests offer.

The hymn is marked by repeated pointing at Agni as the one who can and should bring this wealth. So verses 2, 3, and 7 all begin with a 2nd-person pronoun followed immediately by an address to Agni: "You, o Agni!" In verse 2 there is a progression from Agni's will to sacrifice, to his skill to do so, and finally to his "effective action" in performing the rite, at which point he becomes "worthy of the sacrifice," that is, both worthy to perform his priest's role and worthy to receive offerings as a god.

1. O Agni, who are never poor, bring here the most powerful brilliance to us.
   With wealth and abundance, cut a path to victory's prize for us.

2. You, o undeceiving Agni! By your will, by your readiness of skill for us,
   and by your effective action—upon you has lordliness mounted—you
   are worthy of the sacrifice, like Mitra.
3. You, o Agni! Increase for us the household and prosperity of these,
   our patrons (and) our men, who have obtained rewards through
   praise songs,
4. Who with their gifts of horses, o shimmering Agni, beautify songs
   for you—
   (these) men, spirited with high spirits, whose acclaim (rises) more loftily
   even than heaven. In person he [=Agni] attends (to them).
5. These flashing flames of yours, o Agni, go boldly,
   like earth-encircling lightning bolts, their sound like a chariot chasing
   the prize of victory.
6. Now, (bring us wealth) to help us, o Agni, and to give to the zealous one,
   and for our patrons to pass safely through all regions.
7. You, o Agni, o Aṅgiras, having been praised and being praised, bring us
   wealth that overwhelms the wide-reaching one, for your praisers and for
   us to praise (you), o Hotar. And be present for us to grow strong in
   battles.

V.11 (365) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: jagatī

As in the previous hymn, there is an energetic pointing to Agni, who is insistently named at the beginning of each pāda in verse 4 and addressed in the 2nd person at the beginning of 5abc and 6a, d. There is also an emphasis on Agni's expanse: his radiance (vs. 1) and his smoke (vs. 3) touch heaven; he is a visible beacon (vss. 2, 3); he is present in every household (vs. 4); he is filled with vast power (*śávas*, vs. 5); and he even extends backward in time all the way to the first man, Vivasvant (vs. 3). The description of Agni as shining for the Bharatas (vs. 1) may explain why there is this emphasis on his expanse. The Agni of this hymn may be the tribal fire of the Bharatas, and therefore the poet wishes to emphasize Agni's presence among all the people of the Bharatas and the extent of the Bharatas' territory or power.

1. The herdsman of the people has been born, the awakened, well-skilled
   Agni, for a new safe passage.
   His face covered with ghee, blazing (Agni) radiates brilliantly for the
   Bharatas with lofty (radiance) that touches heaven.
2. As the beacon of their sacrifice, as the foremost one placed to the fore,
   men have kindled Agni in his threefold abode.

   On the same chariot with Indra and the gods, he of strong resolve sits
   down on the ritual grass as Hotar to perform the sacrifice.
3. Though ungroomed, you are born blazing in your two mothers [=the
   fire-churning sticks]. As the delighting poet of Vivasvant, you rose up.
   They made you grow strong with ghee, o (ghee-)anointed Agni. Your
   smoke became a beacon, resting upon heaven.
4. Let Agni successfully pursue our sacrifice. Agni do men distribute in
   every house.
   Agni became their messenger, conveying the oblations. Choosing Agni,
   they choose him who possesses a poet's purpose.
5. For you, Agni, let this most honey-filled speech, for you let this inspired
   thinking be a joy for your heart.
   You do the songs fill with vast power, like great streams the river [=the
   Sindhu], and (you) do they make strong.
6. You, Agni, did the Aṅgirases find, though you were hidden in secret,
   resting in every piece of wood.
   Being churned, you are born to great strength. You they call the child of
   strength, o Aṅgiras.

V.12 (366) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn repeatedly asserts that the poet is speaking the truth (*ṛtá*), and therefore, since Agni himself speaks the truth (vs. 3) and attends to the truth (vs. 2), he should attend to the poet and grant his wishes. In verse 5 the poet contrasts himself and his truth-speaking with those who were apparently once his allies, whose words and whose attacks against him are now twisted and false. The questions in 4bcd are ironic, for in fact Agni offers no protection to a lying cheat. Pāda 4a might also be taken ironically or not: the bonds (*bándhana*) could be the bonds of friendship with Agni—in its other two Ṛgvedic attestations the word means "connection" in a neutral or positive sense—or they could be the fetters that the poet clearly hopes are the cheat's reward.

1. Forth to lofty Agni, worthy of the sacrifice, to the bull of truth, the lord,
   do (I bring) my thought,
   well purified in my mouth at the sacrifice like ghee (in Agni's mouth);
   I bring (forth) my song to be face-to-face with the bull.
2. O you attentive to the truth, attend to just the truth. Bore through to the
   many streams of truth.
   I do not (serve) the sorcerer by strength nor by duplicity; I serve the
   truth of the flame-red bull.

3. In what fashion, o Agni, do you, speaking the truth according to the truth, become aware of our newer speech?
   The god who is rites-guardian of the rites' sequence knows of me; I do not (know) a lord other than him, the winner of wealth here.
4. What bonds do you have for the cheat, Agni? What brilliant protectors will keep winning gain (for him)?
   Which ones protect the wellspring of untruth, o Agni? What herdsmen are there for false speech?
5. These inconstant companions of yours, Agni, though they used to be kind, have become unkind.
   These have injured themselves by their words, speaking twisted things against him who goes straight.
6. The one who summons you to the sacrifice with homage, o Agni, protects the truth of the flame-red bull.
   For him let there come a dwelling place, wide and bringing success, (and also) the posterity of Nahuṣa, who is spreading in every direction.

V.13 (367) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Like the previous hymn, which is also attributed to Sutambhara, this hymn emphasizes the praise song offered to Agni, which causes Agni to grow and to perform the sacrifice as the Hotar. The course of the hymn follows that growth of Agni. In verse 1 the sacrificers are just beginning to kindle Agni. He then spreads wide (vs. 4) and is made strong (vs. 5), until finally, in the last verse, he encompasses the gods.

1. Chanting, we invoke you; chanting, we would kindle you,
   chanting, o Agni, for your help.
2. For Agni we will conceive a praise song, an effective one today for him who touches heaven,
   for the god, as we seek goods.
3. Agni is pleased at our songs—he the Hotar, who is here among the sons of Manu.
   He will perform sacrifice to the divine race.
4. You, o Agni, are spread wide as the pleasing Hotar to be chosen.
   Through you they stretch out the sacrifice.
5. You, o Agni, best prizewinner, do the inspired poets make strong when you are well praised.
   Give us an abundance of heroes.
6. O Agni, like a rim the spokes, you surround the gods.
   I reach toward your shimmering generosity.

V.14 (368) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: gāyatrī

As in his previous two hymns Sutambhara emphasizes the power of the praise song to awaken Agni. Here he fronts the name of Agni (vss. 1, 4–6) or a pronoun referring to Agni (vss. 2, 3) in every verse. Verses 2–3 are not so much exceptions as a variation of the structure of the other verses. These two verses form a single statement that withholds the name "Agni" until it is fronted in their last pāda, 3c. Then verse 4 and the following verses pick up "Agni" and continue with it as the first word in the verse.

1. Agni—awaken him with a praise song, kindling the immortal one.
   He will place our oblations among the gods.
2. Him they invoke in the rites—mortals (invoke) the immortal one, the god—
   to be the best sacrificer among the people of Manu,
3. Because him do they invoke one after another with a spoon dripping with ghee, him the god
   Agni, to convey the oblation.
4. Agni shone as soon as he was born, smashing Dasyus and darkness with his light.
   He found the cows, the waters, and the sun.
5. Agni, to be invoked as our poet—serve him, ghee-backed!
   Let him—he will hear!—track my summons.
6. Agni, governing all territories, have they increased with ghee and praise songs
   of good insight and eloquence.

V.15 (369) Agni

Dharuṇa Āṅgirasa
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Elizarenkova (1995: 152) calls *dharúṇa* "support" the "magic word" of this hymn, since this word is repeated and echoed by other derivatives of √*dhṛ* or by similar sounding words. By attributing the hymn to Dharuṇa, the Anukramaṇī implies that the poet is playing on his name, although it is likely that the Anukramaṇī derives the name of the poet from the repetition of this word. The purpose of this repetition of *dharúṇa* is to underscore the role of Agni as the "supporter of wealth, the support of goods" (vs. 1). The name of Agni is postponed to the very end of the line of this first verse and then is never mentioned again, although echoing Agni the next to last word of the hymn is the name of Atri.

The rest of the hymn presents a number of linguistic and exegetical problems, and this translation accepts the minor emendation in verse 4c of *jarase* to *járase* proposed by Oldenberg. The second verse is particularly mysterious and the translation does not fully unravel it. Geldner suggests that the unnamed subjects are the Aṅgirases, ancient singers, who established the truth as the foundation of the sacrifice in heaven and who, together with their "born" sons, attained the "unborn" Ādityas or the gods generally. We offer another view in the translation. In this interpretation, the subjects are priests, who by the truth of their words support the truth that is the rightly performed sacrifice, which itself is a support, the support of the gods. The priests support the sacrifice by placing it on its support, the heavenly ideal of the sacrifice. In doing so they also support the gods, who gather at the earthly sacrifice, the foundation of heaven. In this way the priests attained the unborn gods by means of their sacrificial fires that have been "born." To be sure, like much else in this verse, the identification of those "born" is uncertain, but note that the bodies of Agni, the different sacrificial fires, are mentioned in verse 3 and that also in this verse the ancient Agni, this time in the singular, is "newly born."

In verse 5, as Geldner rightly notes, the image is from racing. The beckoning prize of victory maintains the diminishing strength of the racer. In the sacrificial context the prize may be Agni's reward, the offerings of melted butter that revive the flagging fire. Thus according to the latter half of the verse, the fire hides within the wood, but after it is revived, it appears again majestically.

1. I bring forth my song to the ritual master and poet worth finding, to the glorious ancient one.
   Seated in ghee is the very kind lord, the supporter of wealth, the support of goods, Agni.
2. By truth they [=the priests] support truth, the support, on the powerful (support) of the sacrifice in the highest heaven,
   and (support) the superior men [=the gods], who have sat down on the support at the foundation of heaven—they who have attained the ones unborn by those born.
3. They stretch out the bodies (of Agni), which keep away confinement, and great vitality, hard to surpass, for the ancient one.
   Though newly born, he would cross the boundaries (of the fireplace), but all around they hem him in, who is like a raging lion.
4. When, spreading, like a mother you carry more and more peoples to be suckled and to see,
   and when *you awaken, acquiring more and more vitality, you go all around with varying forms in your single person.
5. Now let the prize of victory protect the limit of your strength as you give as your milk broad support for wealth.
   Hiding your track like a thief, then appearing greatly for wealth, you have rescued Atri.

V.16 (370) Agni

Pūru Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This and the following hymn are attributed to the same poet, and indeed the two hymns show many parallels: they have the same meter and the same number of verses, and their concluding pāda is identical. Geldner notes that this hymn, like many of the Agni hymns of this maṇḍala, uses rare and affected expressions. Certainly the syntax in this hymn is challenging, especially in verses 3–4, whose complex construction marks the climax of the hymn. The two verses describe the point at which Agni is burning most brightly. At that moment he has become the powerful ally and benefactor of the sacrificers, and at that moment Agni shines beyond both heaven and earth.

Both in these verses and elsewhere in the hymn the poet emphasizes the alliance among Agni, the priests, and their patrons. In verse 1, for example, the expression *mitráṃ ná* compares Agni to Mitra, the god of alliances, and simultaneously compares him to a *mitrá*, an ally. The first is the primary sense, as it is elsewhere, here especially because the hymn refers to Bhaga, another of the Ādityas, in verse 2.

1. Because there is lofty vitality for radiance, chant to the god Agni,
   whom mortals have installed to the fore, like Mitra, with their proclamations.
2. Because he is the Hotar of the peoples in the arms of skill throughout the days,
   Agni allots the oblation in the proper sequence, like Bhaga a wish.
3. At our praise of this generous one and in our companionship with him full-flamed,
   our mightily roaring compatriot, in whom all (beings) have placed unbridled strength—
4. For then, o Agni, (you are) ready to give abundant heroes to these (your companions)—
   the two world-halves do not encompass him, though youthful, nor his fame.
5. Now come to us! Being sung, o Agni, bring here a desirable reward
   to us and our patrons, who together will receive well-being.
   – And be present to strengthen us in battles.

V.17 (371) Agni

Pūru Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

A striking image in this hymn is that of the mouth—the mouth of Agni, who receives the offerings, and the mouth of the priest, who recites the hymns. The poet

associates or even identifies these mouths in verse 2 by using *ásya* "of this one," to refer to either Agni or the priest, and in verse 5, where the mouth is equally that of Agni and that of the priest. The poet insists on these two mouths because they are the means by which the patron of the sacrifice can think himself glorious (vs. 2). In verse 3, however, the poet refers only to the mouth of Agni and shifts to a sexual image. The "thrust" could be the thrust of the poet's song or it could be the thrust of the fire-churning. Because it carries a sexual connotation, line c then describes the semen of Agni that gives birth to lofty flames.

1. Here, o god, by his sacrifices the mortal (should summon) the mightier one for help;
   Pūru should summon Agni to give help, when a good rite has been performed.
2. Since, by reason of the mouth of this one [=both Agni and the poet], o distributor [=sacrificer], you think yourself to have greater glory for yourself,
   (you should summon) him, the vault of heaven with his shimmering blaze, the delighting one beyond inspired thinking.
3. Surely it is by the mouth and flame of this one, who is hitched up by thrust and song,
   by whose semen, like that of heaven, flames blaze aloft,
4. And it is by the will of this one—discerning, wondrous—that there are good things here on the chariot [=the sacrifice].
   So then Agni is proclaimed as the one to be invoked among all the clans.
5. Since the desirable reward is now just ours, our patrons follow after the mouth (of Agni and the poet).
   O child of nourishment, protect us that we prevail. Be capable that we have well-being.
   – And be present to strengthen us in battles.

V.18 (372) Agni

Mṛktavāhas Dvita Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This hymn is a dānastuti, a praise of generous patrons. Renou calls it a dānastuti for the whole preceding sequence of hymns. Dvita, who calls himself, perhaps jokingly, *mṛktávāhas* "him of the broken vehicle," summons Agni to reward Dvita's patrons. Agni should give them fame, although this fame is also partly and directly created by the hymn itself. They deserve this reward because they have generously given Dvita a gift of many horses (vss. 3, 5). The hymn praises Dvita as well, if indirectly, when it mentions the "brilliant insight" of the singer (vs. 4), which because of him exists among the patrons.

1. Early in the morning much beloved Agni, guest of the clan, should be praised,
   the immortal who rejoices at all the oblations among mortals.
2. Your own skill is at the ready for Dvita of the broken vehicle.
   He receives the (soma-)drop in proper sequence even as your praise singer, o immortal one.
3. For you do I summon him of long-lived blaze with a song for (you) generous ones,
   whose chariot speeds away undamaged, o giver of horses,
4. Or among whom is brilliant insight, who protect the recitations in (the singer's) mouth.
   The ritual grass has been strewn near him [=Agni] of sun-like majesty, and they have wrapped themselves in fame.
5. For those who have given me fifty horses for our joint praise,
   for the generous men, o Agni, make bright and great fame, lofty (fame) filled with men, o immortal one.

V.19 (373) Agni

Vavri Ātreya
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–2, anuṣṭubh 3–4, virāḍrūpā 5

As other translators have remarked, this hymn is enigmatic. Renou even describes it as a collection of disjointed verses, and it is true that in its five verses the hymn has three different meters.

The first two verses describe the birth of Agni in terms that suggest human birth. The fire is born from a womb of wood, its first covering, and appears with a caul of smoke, its second covering. Having emerged, it peeps out from the hollow of the lower churning stick that gave it birth. Then priests nurture Agni's growth into manhood, and perhaps Agni himself, as Geldner suggests, becomes a fortress for them, or perhaps the sacrificial ground governed by Agni is their fortress.

In verse 3 it is not clear who Śvaitreya might be. He could be Agni himself, whose kin would be his flames. Or he might be a clan leader or even, as Geldner argues, a racing bull. Because the relationship between Bṛhaduktha and Śvaitreya is unclear, it is equally uncertain how to understand the relationship between 3ab and cd. Bṛhaduktha is elsewhere a poet, and although the Anukramaṇī abstracts Vavri Ātreya as the name of the poet of this hymn from the *vavrí* "covering" in the first verse, it is more likely that Bṛhaduktha is actually the poet. He is apparently seeking the prize the way a horse does. Oldenberg points out that in the Vājapeya sacrifice there is a mantra that invites the horse to drink honey, perhaps to give him strength, and perhaps this custom lies behind the simile in d. The mystery deepens in verse 4, but it appears that Agni, when he is born, then mates with the two fire-churning

sticks that give him birth as he consumes them. The act would seem to be unholy, but that is merely Agni's deception.

The last verse apparently describes the fully mature Agni, flinging his flames in the wind. On this verse, see Hoffmann (1954/61: 46–47 [=1975: 375–76]); he is surely correct to read *sandhṛṣájas*, which could mean "daring warriors" or the like, instead of *san dhṛṣájas* with the Padapāṭha.

1. His low appearances [=low flames] are born forth. From the covering (of wood) a covering (of smoke) has become visible.
   He gazes out in the lap of his mother [=the lower churning stick].
2. Attentive, they [=the priests] have poured various offerings.
   Unblinkingly, they protect his manly power.
   They have entered into the firm fortress.
3. The kin of Śvaitreya have grown strong brilliantly, as have their peoples.
   With ornamented neck, Bṛhaduktha (is) seeking the prize with this (honey) [=soma?], like (a prize-seeking horse) with honey.
4. (His semen) dear like the milk of desire, (his act) unkindred (incest) with two [=fire-churning sticks] that are kin,
   like the vessel of hot milk in whose belly is the prize, (he is) the undeceivable deceiver of every one.
5. Playing, o ray of light, you are here for us, ever finding yourself in alliance with the biting Wind.
   Hurl those well-sharpened flames, like daring warriors their sharp (weapons), o you who stand in the belly [=fire pit].

V.20 (374) Agni

Prayasvanta Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh

As in the previous hymn and the three that follow, the name of the poet has been extracted from the hymn itself, in this case from *práyasvant* "bringing pleasing offerings" in verse 3. The dominant theme is the songs, which are explicitly mentioned in every verse except verse 2, and even there they are probably the understood object in ab. Verse 2 is the most interesting in the hymn because it is not clear to whom the poet refers. It sounds as though the people he criticizes are rival poets, who have prospered through Agni, but who are in some way not acting or not performing the ritual properly now.

1. The wealth that even you hold in regard, o Agni, best winner of victory's prize,
   that yokemate of ours I will extol with songs as worthy of fame among the gods.
2. O Agni, those grown strong by your mighty power who do not send (songs)
   (to keep) away hatred, away crookedness, follow (the commandments) of one who is under the commandments of others.
3. We choose you, o Agni, as our Hotar, ensuring success for our skill.
   Bringing pleasing offerings, we summon with our song the one who is first in the sacrifices.
4. As (we strive) in this way for your help day after day, o powerful one, for wealth and for truth, o you of strong will, we your feasting companions would be united with cattle and we would be united with heroes.

V.21 (375) Agni

Sasa Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4

The name of the poet is extracted from *sasá* "grain" in verse 4, which sticks out as an unusual word in an unusual context. The poet, whatever his name might be, pairs and links similar-sounding words and expressions. The last line of the first verse *devắn devayaté yaja* (1d) is echoed in the first line of the last verse *devắṃ vo devayajyáyā* (4a). He fronts accented forms of the 2nd-person pronoun at the beginning of 2a (*tvám*) and 3a (*tvắm*), both to be read disyllabically, as is normal for *tvám* but not for *tvắm*. These repetitions are thematically the more significant since the poet emphasizes the 2nd-person address to Agni and his role as a god (vss. 3, 4) sacrificing to the gods. But there are other repetitions as well. For example verse 3 links *su-* and *uṣ*-sounds: *mắnuṣe... **súprīta**... **srúcas**... **ānuṣák sújāta sárpirāsute***.

1. Like Manu, we would install you. Like Manu, we would kindle you.
   O Agni, Aṅgiras—like Manu, sacrifice to the gods for the one seeking the gods,
2. For, o Agni, it is you who, well-pleased, are kindled among the people descended from Manu.
   The sacrificial ladles go to you in their proper order, o you, the well-born one whose drink is melted butter.
3. It is you whom all the gods, as one, have made their messenger.
   Waiting upon you, o poet, they invoke you, a god, in the sacrifices.
4. The mortal should invoke for all of you the god Agni with sacrifice to the gods.
   O blazing one, shine when you are kindled. Take your seat upon the womb of truth. Take your seat upon the womb of grain.

V.22 (376) Agni

Viśvasāman Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4

In verse 1 the poet Viśvasāman likely addresses himself. In doing so, he may be playing on the significance of his name, which means "he to whom belongs every tune," for he calls on himself to chant to Agni. The fire is installed as the Hotar of the rite, and like a Hotar he should be attentive. Therefore Viśvasāman asks that Agni be attentive to his praise and to his words. The references to Agni as the "Hotar within the clan" (vs. 1) and to the Atris (vs. 4) suggest that this short hymn was an address to the clan fire of the Atris, and of course the fire of a clan of poets ought to be especially attentive to the speech of poets and especially adorned by songs.

1. O Viśvasāman, like Atri chant forth to him of purifying flame,
   who is to be invoked at the rites as the most delighting Hotar within the clan.
2. Install Agni Jātavedas, the god and priest.
   Let the sacrifice go forth in proper sequence today as that which best encompasses the gods.
3. We mortals have brought to mind you of attentive mind, you a god, for help,
   begging for the help of you, the desirable one.
4. O Agni, be attentive to this (speech) of ours—here is our speech, o strong one!
   The Atris make you strong with their praise songs, o you of fair lips, o lord of the household; the Atris beautify you with song.

V.23 (377) Agni

Dyumna Viśvacarṣaṇi Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4

This hymn invokes the fire that grants wealth, especially a wealth of cattle (vs. 2), which brings with it dominance over surrounding lands. At the same time the ability of Agni to grant wealth and power also depends on the sacrificers who bring the ritual grass (3a), who establish Agni as their Hotar (3c), and whose words confer power on him (1d). The references to the tribes who pursue Agni (vs. 3) and to Agni himself as the one "who belongs to all lands" (vs. 4) suggest that the fire of this hymn either was or was at least compared to the common fire that united the various Ārya peoples.

1. O Agni, bring here wealth that is overpowering through the power of your brilliance
   and that, with prizes at stake, will be powerful over the lands by means of my mouth [=my speech].
2. O powerful Agni, bring here that wealth overpowering in battles,
   for you are the real and infallible giver of the prize that brings cattle.
3. For, with their ritual grass twisted, all the tribes as one
   pursue you as their cherished Hotar in your seats [=fire places] for the sake of many desirable things.
4. For as always, that one who belongs to all lands acquires power against evil intents.
   O Agni, here in these dwellings shine richly for us, o blazing one, shine brilliantly, o pure one.

V.24 (378) Agni

The Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas: Bandhu (1), Subandhu (2) Śrutabandhu (3), and Viprabandhu (4)
4 verses: dvipadā virāj

The Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn's four verses to four poets, all belonging to the family of the Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas. These four poets are brothers in the Gaupāyana family according to an itihāsa (legend) that is supposed to underlie X.57–60, although it is unlikely that these Ṛgvedic hymns actually refer to this story. According to the story the second brother, Subandhu, was killed and brought back to life by the other three. In this hymn, the first and third verses are for protection, while the second verse, the one attributed to Subandhu, is a more generic call for wealth. The last verse simply asks for Agni's favor without being clear what end his favor should serve. In a general way the hymn thus fits the story of the rescue of Subandhu, since the verses surrounding his verse concern the idea of rescue. But such echoes may explain the attribution of the hymn rather than the hymn itself.

1. O Agni, be our nearest and our kind rescuer, providing (us) a shield.
2. Agni is good and famed for goods. Arrive here and give the most brilliant wealth.
3. Be attentive to us, and hear our summons. Give us freedom from anyone who wishes evil.
4. O strongest-blazing, shining (Agni), we now beg you for your favor for (us, your) partners.

V.25 (379) Agni

The Vasūyava Ātreyas
9 verses: anuṣṭubh, arranged in tṛcas

The attribution of this hymn to the Vasūyavas is likely based on verse 9, in which the poet calls himself and his people *vasūyávaḥ* "those seeking goods." As Oldenberg

(1897) notes, the hymn is divided into three tṛcas. This organization would explain its position in the Ātreya Agni collection. A hymn of three tṛcas can follow a hymn of four verses in the proper sequence in which hymns with a fewer number of either verses or strophes follow hymns with a greater number of verses or strophes. However, Oldenberg (1888: 188) also suggests that V.25–28 may be an added supplement to the Agni collection.

In the first tṛca Agni is apparently first becoming present (vs. 2) and has begun to shine (vs. 3). Then in the second (vss. 4–6) the presence of Agni explodes, and the poet marks the force of Agni by constantly repeating his name at the beginning of every hemistich except one (5cd). In the final tṛca (vss. 7–9) the poet turns not so much to the sight of Agni as the sound of Agni. His louder and louder crackling is reflected in the words of the sacrifice and the other sounds of the sacrifice, notably the sounds of the pressing stones that pound the soma, which are themselves regularly connected to the chants and recitations of the rite. The danger of tṛcas, especially when the strophes are as thematically distinct as they are in this hymn, is that the hymn itself may seem to break into blocks. This poet uses ring composition to unify the poem and to underscore its ultimate purpose. In 1d he says that Agni *parṣati dviṣáḥ* "will bring to safety from hatred," and again in 9cd, at the end of the hymn, that *sá no víśvā áti dviṣaḥ / párṣat* "he will bring us to safety across all hatreds." While the two phrases obviously echo one another, note that the poet has not quite repeated himself. Most especially his first assertion seems to be a general one: Agni is the one who brings to safety. But in the last, Agni is the one who brings *us* to safety, applying Agni's more general power to himself and his people.

1. Here for you all I sing to the god Agni for his help. He is the one good for us.
   The son of (dawn's) rays will give; the possessor of truth will bring to safety from hatred.
2. For he is really present—the one whom even the ancients kindled, whom even the gods—
   he the very Hotar of gladdening tongue, who brings radiant goods through his bright light.
3. By your best insight and most excellent favor toward us,
   o Agni, shine on us riches by reason of our well-plaited words, o you who are worthy to be chosen.
4. Agni is king among the gods and Agni among mortals when he enters (among them).
   Agni is the conveyor of oblations for us. Serve Agni with your insights.
5. Agni gives to the pious man an excellent son of very mighty fame and of very mighty formulations,
   one who cannot be overcome and who brings fame to his lord.
6. Agni gives the lord of settlements who prevails in battle with his men;
   Agni (gives) the fast-running charger, the unvanquished victor.
7. What best conveys (offerings), that is for Agni. Chant (your chant) aloft, o you of far-radiant goods.
   Like a buffalo-cow wealth (arises) from you; victory's prizes arise from you.
8. Your flames are brilliant: (they resound) as the pressing stone resounds aloft,
   and just like thunder from heaven your roar has arisen by itself.
9. Thus, seeking goods, we have celebrated Agni who acts with strength.
   He of strong resolve will bring us to safety across all hatreds, as if by a boat.

V.26 (230) Agni

The Vasūyava Ātreyas
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Like the preceding hymn, this hymn comprises three tṛcas. It draws on repeated pādas, especially although not exclusively in the final pādas of verses: 1c = VI.16.2c and VIII.102.16c; 2c = VII.16.4b; 4c = V.20.3a, VIII.60.1b, and X.21.1b; 5c = I.12.4c and VIII.44.14c; 7c = V.22.2b; and 9c = I.39.5d. Geldner provides a complete list of the repetitions. As such, it is reminiscent of the assemblages that constitute the kindling verses in several priestly families (see V.28 below). The first two tṛcas (vss. 1–3, 4–6) are a direct address to Agni to assume his role as the one who conveys oblations to the gods and perfects the ritual. In the third tṛca (vss. 7–9) the poet turns to his fellow priests, telling them to install the fire, prepare the seat for the gods, and perform the rites in order, and then in the final verse, with the fire now blazing and the priests performing their roles, he invites various gods, perhaps representing the All Gods, to take their seats.

1. O purifying Agni, with your radiance and with your gladdening tongue, o god,
   convey the gods hither and sacrifice.
2. O you with ghee-covered back, o you of shimmering radiance, we beg you of sunlike appearance:
   convey the gods hither to pursue (our oblations).
3. O poet, we would kindle you, the brilliant one whose oblations are worth pursuing,
   the lofty one in the rite, o Agni.
4. O Agni, come with all the gods for the giving of oblations.
   We choose you as our Hotar.
5. Convey an abundance of heroes to the sacrificer pressing soma, o Agni!
   Sit here on our ritual grass along with the gods!

6. Being kindled, o thousand-conquering Agni, you prosper the (ritual) foundations
as the praiseworthy messenger of the gods.

7. Install Agni Jātavedas, who conveys the oblations, the youngest (Agni),
as god and priest.
8. Let the sacrifice go forth in proper sequence today as that which best encompasses the gods.
Strew the sacred grass (for the gods) to sit.
9. Let the Maruts, the Aśvins, and Mitra and Varuṇa sit here upon this,
let the gods with their whole clan.

V.27 (381) Agni

Kings Tryaruṇa Traivṛṣṇa, Trasadasyu Paurukutsya, and Aśvamedha Bhārata, or Atri Bhauma
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, anuṣṭubh 4–6, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn consists of two tṛcas, so it is in its proper place according to its length. Nonetheless, Oldenberg (*Noten* and 1897) regards it as an addition to the original collection.

The hymn is a dānastuti addressed to allied patrons or kings. The Anukramaṇī names three patrons, but, as Oldenberg (1897) and Geldner suggest, Tryaruṇa might be a descendant of Trasadasyu and bear his name as an epithet (vs. 3). If so, then the hymn addresses two men, Tryaruṇa (vss. 1–3 in triṣṭubh) and Aśvamedha (vss. 4–6 in anuṣṭubh). In verse 4 Tryaruṇa commands Aśvamedha to reward the poet, but it remains unclear just how the two are related.

The translation and interpretation of the hymn become difficult especially at verse 3, which is open to a number of different constructions. We understand 3ab to mean that the sacrificer desires Agni's favor for the poet's hymn. Why he should desire this favor *navamám* "for the ninth time" is not stated, but there is a parallel in VIII.24.23, which calls on the poet to praise *daśamám* "a tenth time." In both verses the numbers may simply indicate "many times." Here in this hymn, however, it is likely that *navamám*, especially because it follows *náviṣṭhāya* "for the newest," either means "anew" rather than "ninth" or puns on the two meanings. The "harnessed chariot," with which Tryaruṇa welcomes the poet's song in 3cd, may be a gift to the poet, or it may be the sacrifice itself, which elsewhere is represented as a chariot.

Verse 4 begins the second tṛca, a transition that is marked also by a change in meter. But in contrast to the clear segmentation of the hymn shown by the tṛca form and the meter, the syntax binds verse 4 with verse 3, since the opening relative clause is coordinate with the relative clause in 3cd. This may reproduce the relationship between Tryaruṇa and Aśvamedha, who are two individuals but who are in some manner bound to one another.

1. The lord of settlements has readied for me two oxen together with an ox-cart—he, the most illustrious lord, more (illustrious) than (any other) generous patron.
Tryaruṇa, son of Trivṛṣan, is illustrious through his tens of thousands (of cattle), o Agni Vaiśvānara.
2. To him who gives to me a hundred and twenty cattle and two harnessed fallow bays, compliant to the chariot-pole—
to Tryaruṇa offer protection, o Agni Vaiśvānara, o you who are well praised and grown strong.
3. In this way, o Agni, Trasadasyu [=Tryaruṇa] is desiring your favor for the newest (hymn) for the ninth time—
Tryaruṇa, who welcomes with a harnessed (chariot) the many songs of mine for (you), the one powerfully born;

4. (Tryaruṇa), who will declare thus to my patron Aśvamedha:
"Let him [=Aśvamedha] give to (the poet) questing for gain by his verse; let him give to the one who seeks the truth, (questing for) wisdom."
5. (Such are) the gifts of Aśvamedha, whose hundred gray bulls
excite me like soma juices with their three additions [=milk, curds, barley].
6. O Indra and Agni, keep an abundance of heroes with Aśvamedha, the giver of a hundred (cattle),
and (keep with him) dominion, lofty and unaging like the sun in heaven.

V.28 (382) Agni

Viśvavārā Ātreyī
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1, 3, jagatī 2, anuṣṭubh 4, gāyatrī 5, 6, arranged in tṛcas

The Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to a female poet, but her name is extracted from *viśvávārā* "bringing all desirable things" in 1c, which describes the sacrificial ladle.

One of the striking features of this hymn is its use of four different meters in its six verses. As that metrical variation suggests, the hymn is not a unified composition but rather a collection of verses from the Atri tradition, brought together as sāmidhenī verses to accompany the kindling of fire. There are similar composite sāmidhenī hymns in the collections of the Viśvāmitras (III.27) and of the Bharadvājas (VI.16). As Proferes (2003: 10) notes, these hymns are three of the four hymns used by both the Śāṅkhāyana and Āśvalāyana traditions for the compilation of the sāmidhenī verses used in the classical Vedic rites.

Even though the hymn is a compilation, the tṛca form does reflect its structure. The first three verses urge Agni to show himself as he comes into flame. In 1cd the description sounds as though it might refer to the dawn (in 1b), but at the end the subject is revealed to be the ghee-filled ladle, or perhaps it is both the ghee-filled

ladle and the ghee-filled dawn that move forward, the first to the east, the second toward the west. The second ṭṛca (4–6) begins with a praise of the fire in full blaze and an invocation to him to take on the task of bringing the oblations to the gods.

1. Kindled, Agni has lifted his flame to heaven. Facing the dawn, he radiates widely.
   Forward she goes with our homage, bringing all desirable things, summoning the gods with the oblation—she, the ghee-filled (ladle).
2. When you are being kindled, you rule over what is immortal. For well-being you accompany him who prepares the oblation.
   He acquires all material wealth whom you urge onward, and he sets his hospitality in front, o Agni.
3. O Agni, show yourself off for the sake of great good fortune. Let your brilliance be very high.
   Let our united household be easy to control. Surmount the great powers of those who act as our rivals.
4. I extol the glory of you, kindled and greatly exalted, o Agni.
   You are the bull of brilliance. You are kindled in the rites.
5. When you are kindled, o Agni of poured offerings, sacrifice to the gods, o you of good rites,
   for you are the conveyor of oblations.
6. Pour an offering to Agni and seek his friendship as the rite goes forth.
   Choose him as the conveyor of oblations.

V.29 (383) Indra

Gaurivīti Śāktya
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn consists primarily of a recital of Indra's great deeds, with special attention to the Vṛtra saga and the Maruts' role in it (vss. 1–4, 6–9). Interspersed are verses devoted to two much less understood myths, Indra's conflict with the Sun in an apparent chariot race (vss. 5, 9–10) and his journey with Kutsa to Uśanā's house and the defeat of Śuṣṇa (vs. 9), myths that often appear together and show narrative connections. There are as well brief mentions of other exploits of Indra, including the Vala myth (vs. 12). The story of the Sun's chariot and the Kutsa/Uśanā complex are particular preoccupations of the Indra hymns of Maṇḍala V, although the references to them (Sun's chariot V.31.11, Kutsa/Uśanā V.31.7–10) do not help to clarify the details as much as we would like.

The poet several times (vss. 1, 3, 7) mentions Manu, the first Ārya man and sacrificer, in connection with the mythic past. This emphasis on Manu, the theoretical ancestor of the current sacrificers, is presumably meant to associate those current sacrificers with the participants and supporters of Indra in his previous deeds, in order to gain a portion of reflected glory. As often, the hymn sometimes narrates the myths as if in present time (see esp. vss. 1, 6, 12, all three using the same verb "they chant" [*árcanti*]). This again is a strategy serving the same purpose, here by specifically identifying the present singers with both the Maruts and the Aṅgirases.

The hymn is also structured by recurrent soma-drinking phrases, each slightly different, almost always in the second half of an even pāda (see 2b, 3b, 3d, 5b, 7d, 8b, 11d), a pattern that provides a sort of rhythmic theme-and-variations.

It ends with three verses (13–15) in which the poet refers globally to the amazing range of Indra's deeds past and future, and in the final verse offers him his own well-crafted poems. Only one word in this verse, *vasūyúḥ* "seeking goods," out of the whole hymn, hints that the poet would like something in return.

1. They uphold the three customs [=rituals of the soma-pressing day] at Manu's attendance on the gods and the three heavenly realms of light.
   The Maruts of refined skill chant to you. You are their wise seer, Indra.
2. When the Maruts chanted to him after he became exhilarated, to Indra who had drunk of the pressed soma,
   he took up the mace. When he (had) smashed the serpent, he released the exuberant waters to flow.
3. And—you formulators, you Maruts—Indra should drink of this well-pressed soma of mine,
   for this is his oblation: he found the cows for Manu; Indra smashed the serpent, having drunk of it.
4. After that he propped the two world-halves wide apart; even while enwrapped, he set the wild beast to fearing.
   Repeatedly taunting the gulper, Indra smashed the snorting Dānava back and down.
5. Then according to your will, o bounteous one, all the gods conceded the soma-drinking to you,
   when you put the flying golden mares of the Sun behind, though they were in front, in (the presence of) Etaśa.
6. When the bounteous one hews apart his [=Vṛtra's] nine and ninety coils at one blow with his mace,
   the Maruts chant to Indra at the seat (of conflict). With speech in triṣṭubh meter he thrusts heaven (away from earth).
7. As a comrade for a comrade, Agni straightaway cooked three hundred buffalo in accord with his [=Indra's] will.
   Indra drank the pressed soma of Manu, three lakes worth at one blow, for the Vṛtra-smashing.
8. When you the bounteous devoured the flesh of three hundred buffaloes and drank three somian lakes,
   all the gods called "Carry (the day)!" to Indra as (a gambler calls) "Game!," when he smashed the serpent.

9. When, Indra, (you and Kutsa) drove to the home of Uśanā with the mighty, speeding horses,
as combatant you drove there on the same chariot with Kutsa, with the gods. You combated Śuṣṇa.
10. You tore off the one wheel of the Sun for Kutsa; the other you made into wide space for driving.
You crushed the Dasyus mouthless with your murderous weapon; you wrenched those of slighting speech down into a woeful womb.
11. The praises of Gaurivīti strengthened you. You made Pipru subject to Vaidathina.
Ṛjiśvan brought you here for companionship, cooking cooked foods (for you). You drank his soma.
12. The Navagvas, the Daśagvas [=Aṅgirases], having pressed soma, chant to Indra with chants.
Just that cowpen with its covering [=Vala cave]—just that have the men, having ritually labored, opened up.
13. How shall I, (though) knowing them, now encompass your heroic deeds that you have done, o bounteous one,
and the new ones that you will do, strongest one? We will proclaim these (deeds) of yours at the ceremonies.
14. Having done all these many (deeds), Indra, by your nature you cannot be circumscribed in heroism.
As for those (deeds) you will do even now in your daring, possessor of the mace—there exists no one to obstruct this power of yours.
15. O Indra, enjoy the sacred formulations being made, the new ones we have made for you, strongest one.
Like garments, lovely and well made, like a chariot have I fashioned them—I the clever artisan, seeking goods.

V.30 (384) Indra

Babhru Ātreya
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn follows a fairly straightforward chronological trajectory. The poet begins by wondering where Indra is (vs. 1), locates him on the way to the sacrifice (vs. 2), and promises the god to recite his deeds at the ceremony (vs. 3). This recital occupies the middle of the hymn (vss. 4–10), ending (vs. 11) with a return to the ritual setting, where Indra, pleased by the soma, bestows cows. This mythic model provides a smooth transition to the last four verses (12–15), the poet's dānastuti, praising his patrons the Ruśamas and their king, Ṛṇaṃcaya (lit., "he who requites his debts"), for their gift to him of four thousand cows, plus a piece of ritual equipment, a pot. The poet names himself in verse 14.

The recital of Indra's deeds touches on the Vala myth (vs. 4), the Vṛtra myth (vss. 5–6), and the defeat of Namuci (vss. 7–8). The intriguing mention of the Dāsa "who made women his weapons" (vs. 9) is unfortunately more opaque; however, it may be connected with an equally opaque verse, I.104.3. In our view both passages refer to rivers controlled by the Ārya's consistent, and perhaps indigenous, opponents, thus serving as a barrier to Ārya progress. The words "river" and "stream" (*dhénā*) are feminine in gender, and so these are the female "weapons" of 9a. Once Indra has recognized that the "weapons" are mere (female) streams, he leads the charge against the Dāsa foe. The cows captured in this raid may be referred to in verse 10, the same cows that Indra distributes in verse 11.

1. Where is this hero? Who has seen Indra of the well-naved chariot speeding with his two fallow bays,
the mace-bearer, who, seeking one who has pressed the soma, will come to that home, when he is much invoked, with wealth, with help?
2. I spotted his track in secret; I followed the powerful track of the one who laid it down, seeking him.
I asked the others, and they said to me, "We men might attain Indra, since we have wakened (early)."
3. We shall now proclaim at the pressing the deeds that are yours, Indra, which you will enjoy (hearing) from us.
He will learn who does not know, and he will hear who does know: "This bounteous one is traveling here fully armed."
4. You made your mind steadfast when you were just born, Indra; even alone you pursue the many for battle.
You made even a stone flash like lightning through your vast power; you found the pen of the ruddy cows.
5. When you were born far away in the farthest (realm), bearing a name famous afar,
from then on even the gods feared Indra. He conquered all the waters, those whose husband [=Vṛtra] was a Dāsa.
6. Just for you do these friendly Maruts chant the chant, press the stalk.
The serpent vaunting himself, lying on the waters—Indra will overcome the tricky one with tricks.
7. You hewed apart those negligent by nature, stimulating giving, o bounteous one, taking pleasure along with the cow,
at the time when you caused the head of the Dāsa Namuci to roll, seeking an (open) way for Manu—
8. For you have made me your yokemate, Indra—just afterward stealing the head of the Dāsa Namuci,
which was rolling, (like?) a whizzing stone, like the two world-halves (that roll) forth like two wheels, for the Maruts.
9. Because the Dāsa made women his weapons, what can they do to me? His armies lack strength.

Since he [=Indra] distinguished both his [=the Dāsa's?] streams,
therefore Indra advanced on the Dasyu to fight.

10. Together the cows then lowed on every side, since they were here, there, and everywhere separated from their calves.
Along with his powerful (men) Indra drove them together, when the well-pressed soma drinks exhilarated him.

11. When the soma drinks rinsed by Babhru exhilarated him, the bull set up a bellowing among the (ritual) seats.
The stronghold-splitting Indra, having drunk of it, gave again of the ruddy cows.

12. The Ruśamas have done this auspicious thing, o Agni, in giving four thousand cows.
The proffered bounties of Ṛṇaṃcaya, most manly of men, we have accepted.

13. The Ruśamas send me home well-ornamented with thousands of cows, o Agni.
The sharp (soma-drinks, when) pressed, exhilarated Indra at the early brightening of the night, at its final turn.

14. (When) that night brightened at its final turn, at (the hands of) Ṛṇaṃcaya, king of the Ruśamas,
like a steed quick in competition, being driven [/anointed], Babhru won four thousand (cows).

15. Four thousand bovine livestock have we accepted from the Ruśamas.
Also the gharma pot, which was heated for the Pravargya rite, the one made of copper, that too have we inspired poets taken.

V.31 (385) Indra

Avasyu Ātreya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous Indra hymns in this maṇḍala, this hymn provides a survey of Indra's great deeds, with the ritual context for this recital made explicit in verses 5–6 and Indra's journey to the sacrifice sketched in verses 1–2. The recital itself is fragmentary and mosaic-like, with glittering vignettes from various myths juxtaposed unordered. This fragmented nature is enhanced by abrupt switches between the past and the present/future (see, e.g., vss. 6, 11). The stories of the chariot of the Sun (vs. 11) and of Kutsa and Uśanā (vss. 7–10) encountered in V.29 recur here, vivid but enigmatic. The ritual context returns in the final two verses, with Indra's arrival at the sacrifice (12) and prayers for Indra's help (13).

1. Indra makes an easy slope for his chariot, the prize-seeking one, which the bounteous one has mounted.
Like a herdsman separating the flocks of livestock, he keeps (his chariot) separate (from the others). Invulnerable, he drives as the first to seek winnings.

2. Run hither, you of the fallow bays; do not lose the track. You of tawny [=golden] gifts, accompany us,
for there exists nothing better than you, Indra: you have provided even those lacking the brideprice with wives.

3. When he was born as might from might, Indra displayed all his Indrian powers.
He impelled forth the good milkers (who were) within the cave; he pried apart the darkness, which was rolled up in a ball, with light.

4. The Anu people fashioned a chariot for your horse; Tvaṣṭar (fashioned) the brilliant mace, o much invoked one.
The formulators, magnifying Indra with their chants, strengthened him to smash the serpent.

5. When for you the bull, o Indra, the bulls and the pressing stones will chant a chant, with Aditi in concord—
the (pressing stones like) wheel-rims which, (even) without horses, without chariots, but impelled by Indra, rolled over the Dasyus—

6. I will proclaim your previous deeds, proclaim the current ones that you have done, bounteous one,
when, potent one, you will pull apart both world-halves, winning the waters, bright in drops, for Manu.

7. Just this now is your deed, wondrous poet: that smashing the serpent, you measured out your strength there.
Even Śuṣṇa's magic arts you enveloped; on your way to the ritual meal you repelled the Dasyus.

8. You brought the waters, the good milkers, to rest for Yadu and Turvaśa, (when you were their) transport, Indra.
You two drove to the strong one [=Uśanā]—that is, you conveyed Kutsa—when the gods encountered you two along with Uśanā.

9. [Uśanā:] "O Indra and Kutsa, let the steeds convey you two, traveling by chariot, right here close to our face [/lit. ear].
You two blow him [=Śuṣṇa?] out of the water, out of his seat; (by doing this) you two will keep the dark shadows away from the heart of the bounteous one."

10. It was just this sage poet [=Indra?] who had gone, seeking help, to the yoked horses of the Wind, so easy to yoke.
All the Maruts were your partners then, Indra; their sacred formulations strengthened your power.

11. The very chariot of the Sun, (which is) in front, at the decisive turning
he will put behind, (though) it is speeding.
Etaśa [=the Sun's horse] bore the wheel; he restores it. Putting (the
chariot?) in front (again?), he will gain our intention.
12. This Indra has come here to look about, o peoples, seeking a partner
who has pressed the soma.
The pressing stone, speaking, will be carried down to the altar—the
stone whose nimble (action) the Adhvaryus attend to.
13. Those who take pleasure [/are dear (to you)], they shall take pleasure
now [/shall be dear]. The mortals, o immortal one—let them not
encounter constraint.
Cherish the worshipful ones and place strength among these your
peoples, among whom may we be.

V.32 (386) Indra

Gātu Ātreya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

In contrast to the bricolage of the previous hymn, this hymn concentrates on a single myth, the Vṛtra battle, occupying verses 1–8 and providing one of the most sustained accounts of this story outside of I.32. But this poet avoids using the standard formulae associated with that narrative, instead ringing changes on the normal phraseology (especially the *áhann áhim* formula: "you/he smashed the serpent," which does not appear as such in this hymn). Considerable attention is paid to Indra's opponent, but interestingly the word *vṛtrá* is never used. Instead he is identified several times as Dānava (descendant of Dānu, who is called Vṛtra's mother in I.32.9, or a member of the demonic Dānu tribe) and once called *śúṣṇa*, usually the name of a different foe of Indra (see, e.g., nearby V.29.9), but here probably used in its etymological sense, "hisser." But mostly he is nameless, a state emphasized by the emphatic, repeated, verse-initial forms of *t(i)yá- cid* "that very one" (vss. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8), a sort of empty and open-ended deictic that attracts a series of shifting descriptors of horror. The emphasis on darkness (vss. 4, 5, 6), fog (vs. 4), and emptiness (vs. 7) also suggests an indistinct enemy that lacks proper definition.

After this depiction of Indra's great victory over the multifarious monster, it comes as no surprise that in the next verses (9–11) Indra's power is universally acknowledged by cosmic forces and mortals alike. Verse 9 opens with the question "who can obstruct him?"—using the verb *varāte*, belonging to the same root and having the same semantics as the suppressed name Vṛtra "obstruction." The question thus carries with it an implied conditional—"who can obstruct him if Obstruction itself cannot?"—with the implicit answer obviously "no one." The last verse turns, as often, to the benefits Indra can bestow on the poet, ending with a perhaps teasing rhetorical question, paraphrasable as: "Do (other) poets complain about your gifts?"

1. You violently split the wellspring; you reamed out its apertures. You
brought to peace the floods, which had been hard pressed.
When, Indra, you pried apart the great mountain, you set loose the
streams; you smashed down the Dānava.
2. You, o mace-bearer, sent speeding the wellsprings that had been hard
pressed through the seasons (in?) the udder of the mountain.
Having smashed the very serpent lying spread out for some distance,
strong Indra, you assumed your power.
3. With his powers Indra smashed away the weapon of that very one, the
great wild beast,
who was thinking himself unopposable even on his own. But then there
was born one more powerful than he.
4. That very one—drunk on his own power, belonging to them [=the
Dānavas], child of the fog, grown very strong, emerging from
darkness,
the Wrath of the Dānavas—(it was) the hisser [/Śuṣṇa] that the
mace-bearer smashed down with his mace, he who receives the
proffered bullish (soma) offering.
5. That very one (he smashed down), (so he became) sunk down in accord
with his [=Indra's] intentions. He found just that vulnerable place of
him (who thought himself) invulnerable,
when at the proffering of the invigorating (soma) you consigned him
who sought battle to darkness, (as if) to a secure house, o you of good
dominion.
6. That very one, lying just so, horribly swollen, having grown strong in the
sunless darkness,
just him did the bull Indra, invigorated on the pressed (soma), smash
from above, after taunting him.
7. When Indra held up to the great Dānava his weapon, which was
unopposable might itself,
when at the proffering of the mace he outwitted him, he made him the
lowest of all creation.
8. The strong one [=Indra] mightily took that very one—the honey-drinker
lying on the flood, the insatiable cavity,
the footless devourer with slighting speech; with a great murderous
weapon he wrenched him down into a woeful womb.
9. Who can obstruct his tempestuousness, his power? Alone, unopposable,
he bears away riches.
Even these two goddesses [=the two world-halves] now bend (away) from
fear of his expansion, of Indra's strength.

10. The heavenly hatchet [/the goddess Autonomous Power] bends down to him; to Indra a way [/Gātu = poet's name] yields itself, like an eager (wife).
When he joins his whole strength with them, the settled peoples incline themselves to the one of autonomous power.
11. I hear of you as born the sole master of settlements, belonging to the five peoples, glorious among the peoples,
(while) my hopes have grabbed (always) for the newest Indra, calling on him (every) evening and dawn.
12. For thus I hear of you as arranging the bounties in the proper season and as giving them to inspired poets.
Do the formulators, your comrades, complain, who have deposited their desire with you, Indra?

V.33 (387) Indra

Saṃvaraṇa Prājāpatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

The structure of this hymn is relatively straightforward. It begins (vs. 1) with the poet's praise of Indra, presented as an inducement to the god to come to his sacrifice, followed (vss. 2–3) by the usual tropes of a "journey" hymn, including the yoking of Indra's horses. The poet recognizes that there are competing sacrifices (vs. 4a), but continues to urge Indra to choose to come to his (vs. 5). There follow two verses (6–7) asking for gifts from Indra. The hymn ends with a three-verse dānastuti (8–10), praising the gift of horses from a number of different patrons.

1. I conjure up a great (praise) for the great, powerful one among superior men, for Indra so very powerful—I who am not so powerful—
he who, praised among the people as battle-ready, takes note of the good thought (directed) toward him at the prize-winning.
2. You, Indra, being conjured up by our chants, have fixed the yoking thong for the fallow bays, you bull.
You will drive here just so, following your pleasure, bounteous one. You will bring (good things); you will be victorious over the peoples of the stranger.
3. These (horses) of yours (will) not (remain) unyoked because of us [i.e., because of our failure], lofty Indra, if it's for lack of a (yoking) formulation.
Mount on the chariot with mace in hand. You with the good horses will hold your own rein, o god.

4. Just as there are many hymns that exist for you, Indra, and many are (the deeds) you have done for the cow, when fighting over the meadows,
(and many [the paths]?) you carved out also for the sun in your [/his] own home, as bull you (have carved out) even the names of the Dāsa in the contests.
5. We are yours, Indra—as are the superior men born as a troop [=Maruts?] and the driving-chariots.
As a consummate warrior he [=Indra] should come here to us, o you with the serpent's hiss—dear, like Bhaga to be invoked at our forays [/dear like a portion to be offered at our (ritual) presentations].
6. For, Indra, in you are strength to be nurtured and manly powers. As prancing immortal,
give us dappled wealth, you winner of goods. I will start up the praise for the gift of the powerfully bounteous stranger.
7. So, help us, Indra, with your help. Protect the singers, the bards, o champion.
And please those giving the skin of the dear, well-pressed honey at the winning of prizes.
8. And these gold-bedecked (horses) of my patron, Paurukutsya Trasadasyu, when they are given—
let his ten white ones convey me. I am attended by the intentions of Gairikṣita.
9. And (let) these (convey me)—the ruddy (horses) of Mārutāśva, the bounty of his intentions at the giving of the distribution,
(when) Cyavatāna was giving a thousand of his own to me. Afterward (the singer) sang as if to marvel (at the gift) of the stranger [=Indra].
10. And (let) these (convey me)—the enjoyable (horses) of Dhvanya Lakṣmaṇya, the very bright ones having being marshaled.
Through the greatness of his wealth the proffered (horses) have come, like cows to the cowpen, (to the enclosure) of the seer Saṃvaraṇa.

V.34 (388) Indra

Saṃvaraṇa Prājāpatya
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9

The first three verses of this hymn urge sacrificers to make offerings to Indra and promise them a return on this investment of ritual energy, and the preoccupation throughout most of the hymn is the contrast between the generous and the stingy and their respective fates (see esp. vss. 5–7). There is a hostile and dangerous edge to

much of the rhetoric: the punishments Indra metes out to non-givers are described with gusto.

But the most curious feature of the hymn is verse 4, where Indra, depicted as the killer of the father, mother, and brother of an apparently blameless man, not only feels no remorse ("he does not shrink from his offense"), but expects to receive offerings from his victim. The word "offense" used here is a rare and charged one (*kílbiṣa*): the uncompounded form is found only here in the Ṛgveda, and the four other (compounded) occurrences of it are in late hymns in Maṇḍala X. Our passage here seems a foreshadowing of a theme in Indra mythology that becomes highly developed in the middle Vedic period, that of Indra's offenses or misdeeds, catalogued as a set of *kilbiṣāṇi* (see Jamison 1991: 64–68), with Indra as the figure of a warrior run amuck. But the theme seems out of place in the context here, save perhaps for Indra's excessively aggressive behavior toward the stingy in other verses. (The stingy deserve this treatment, however, in the ritual calculus of the Ṛgveda; the man violently deprived of his kin does not.)

The hymn ends with what appears to be a truncated dānastuti (vs. 9): the poet praises his apparent patron Āgniveśi Śatri, but no gifts are mentioned.

1. Autonomous power, unaging, solar, immeasurable, speeds after him, the wondrous, whose rival has not been born.
   Press, cook for the one whose vehicle is the sacred formulation; set more (offerings) out for the one praised by many.
2. He who filled his belly with soma, the bounteous one, drew exhilaration from the honey, the stalk,
   when Uśanā, possessing the great weapon, held the thousand-spiked weapon (out to him), to smash the wild beast.
3. Whoever presses soma for him in the heat or whoever in the cold, he certainly becomes heaven-bright.
   The able one, the bounteous one who is partner to the poet (/Kavi [Uśanā]), snatches off the extended (garment), resplendent on his body.
4. The man whose father the able one has smashed, whose mother, whose brother—he [=Indra] does not shrink (even) from him.
   Rather, he actually pursues his offerings; the arranger, the distributor of goods does not shrink from his offense.
5. He does not wish to grasp (the offerings) (only) by fives or tens. He does not keep company with a man who doesn't press (soma), even a prosperous one.
   He either despoils (him as he goes) along the way, or the tumultuous one smashes (him). But he gives to the god-seeker a share in the pen full of cattle.
6. Very energetic in the clash, affixing the wheel (to the chariot?), he is antagonistic to the non-presser, but strengthener of the presser.
   Indra is the dominator of all, spreading fear; the Ārya leads the Dāsa as he wishes.
7. He drives together the sustenance of the niggard, to steal it, but he shares out liberal goods to the pious.
   In a (place) of no exit there is held firmly each and every people that has antagonized his power.
8. When the two wealthy peoples with all their troops (clashed) together, Indra the bounteous pursued (them) in the (battles for) resplendent cattle.
   Since the shaker has made one of them his yokemate, he drives up for himself the bovine (wealth) (of the other)—the tumultuous one along with his warriors.
9. The thousand-winning Āgniveśi Śatri will I sing, the measure and the beacon for the stranger, o Agni.
   For him the waters will swell continuously; in him let there be lordly power aggressive and ardent.

V.35 (389) Indra

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
8 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 8

A simple hymn calling on Indra for help, the word that provides the outer skeleton of the hymn: forms of the root "help" (√*av*) as noun or verb are found in the first three verses and the last two (7–8). The interior verses (4–6) simply provide conventional praise of Indra's powers.

1. Your resolve to help that best brings success, Indra, bring that here—the resolve that conquers the territories for us, a winner difficult to surpass in the (contests for) prizes.
2. Whether you have four, Indra, or you have three, o champion, or five settlements (for you to help)—bring this same help to us now.
3. We summon hither the help worthy to be chosen, the help of you, the most bullish one,
   for you were born with the speed of a bull, Indra, victorious with your (forms of help) ready at hand.
4. For you are a bull; for benefit you were born; bullish is your power.
   Your daring mind has its own dominion; your masculine nature smites entirely.
5. You, Indra, possessor of the stone—run down the mortal who acts the foe,
   chariot and all, you lord of power who possess a hundred resolves.

6. Just you, best smasher of obstacles, do the peoples, when they have twisted their ritual grass,
call on for the winning of prizes—you the strong, foremost among the many (peoples) [/in the many (battles)].
7. Our chariot, Indra—help it, the one difficult to surpass, driving in front in the contests,
driving together (with you?) whenever the stakes (are set), seeking prizes.
8. Our chariot, Indra—come help it along with Plenitude.
We would establish desirable fame for ourselves in heaven, strongest one; we will conceive a praise (poem) (to reach) to heaven.

V.36 (390) Indra

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 3

Like the preceding hymn, attributed to the same poet, this one keeps its focus on Indra, but is less predictable in its phraseology. The first four verses deploy a series of similes characterizing Indra, the soma, and the singer(s). Verse 5 plays heavily with the word "bull" (*vṛ́ṣan*) for Indra and his accoutrements, a device that returns more insistently in the first four verses of V.40. The final verse (6) is a short dānastuti to the patron Śrutaratha ("[Having a] Famous Chariot"), whose name may have inspired the wheel and chariot imagery of verse 3: the phrase "from the chariot" in that verse is somewhat puzzling on the surface, but if it slyly expresses the hope that the singer will become one "possessing many goods from (Famous) Chariot," it may be a prefiguring of the dānastuti.

1. He will come here—Indra, who will be attentive to the giving of the gift of goods and riches.
Like a buffalo roaming the wasteplaces, thirsting, let him desirously drink the milked plant.
2. Soma mounts your jaws, your lips, you champion, possessor of the fallow bays, as the soma plant grows on the back of a mountain.
Like one driving his steeds, we all would cheer you on with hymns, o much-invoked king.
3. Like a wheel set rolling my mind trembles with fear of neglect, o much-invoked possessor of the stone.
Surely the singer will now praise you from the chariot, o ever-strengthening bounteous one—(so he will become) one possessing many goods?
4. This singer, like a pressing stone, raises his voice high to you, Indra, panting after (you).

With your left hand, bounteous possessor of the fallow bays, hold forth wealth, and hold it forth right-handed: do not lose track.
5. Let bullish heaven strengthen you, the bull; as bull you travel with your two bullish fallow bays.
As bull with a bullish chariot, well-lipped one, as bull with bullish will, you of the mace, set us up in loot.
6. He who, possessing prizewinning mares, has allotted (to me) two prizewinning chestnuts accompanied by three hundred (cows?),
to him, the youth, let the settled peoples together do homage, to Śrutaratha, o Maruts, in friendship.

V.37 (391) Indra

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Two verses devoted to the activities of the dawn sacrifice open the hymn; the last two verses (4–5) describe the successes of the king whose sacrifice Indra attends, with the king's actions assimilated to Indra's great deeds (Vala and Vṛtra, both 4cd). The middle verse (3) is a sort of riddle and serves, therefore, as a mild omphalos: the bride in question may be Speech, as the beloved of Indra (as some have suggested), or perhaps Dawn. The husband may be Indra, or the Sun. (We favor the Dawn/Sun interpretation, which is in keeping with the dawn-ritual context.)

There are two pieces of onomastic verbal play that look outside the hymn proper. In verse 3c the phrase "his chariot will seek fame" (*śravasyā́d ráthaḥ*) recalls the name of the patron Śruta-ratha, whose praise ended the previous hymn (V.36.6). And the phrase "with the radiance of the sun" (*bhānúnā... sū́ryasya*) in the first pāda of the hymn (1a), describing Agni, is actually the solution to the story of Svar-bhānu ("[Having] the Sun's Radiance") told in V.40.5–9. It is especially appropriate to find this answer given at the beginning of this hymn here, as it is the first in a series of hymns attributed to Atri, among which is V.40.

1. He [=Agni] aligns himself with the radiance of the sun, being bepoured, with ghee on his back, of lovely outlook.
The non-neglectful dawns will shine forth to him [=sacrificer] who says "Let us press (soma) for Indra."
2. With his fire kindled and his ritual grass spread, he will win; with his pressing stones yoked and his soma pressed, he will sing;
whose pressing stones speak vigorously, he will go, as Adhvaryu, down to the river with an oblation.
3. Here she goes, a bride seeking a husband who will take her home as vigorous chief wife.

His chariot will seek fame here and will sound loudly here; it will roll itself for many thousand (leagues).

4. That king does not falter, by whom Indra drinks the sharp soma whose comrades are cows.
   He drives (the cows) here with his warriors, he smashes Vṛtra; he dwells peacefully, prospering the settled peoples, bearing the name "Well-portioned."
5. He will prosper in peace, and he will prevail at the hitching up (for war); (when) the two opponents are clashing together, he will entirely conquer;
   he will become dear to the Sun, dear to Agni—the one who with pressed soma will do ritual service to Indra.

V.38 (392) Indra

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

Geldner, the most authoritative twentieth-century translator of the Ṛgveda, pronounced this hymn empty of content ("inhaltslos"). This judgment does not seem entirely fair, but the hymn is characterized by a certain lack of syntactic coherence, as well as an overabundance of elaborate vocatives addressed to Indra. It is not clear who the second god is in verse 3, though he is possibly Varuṇa; otherwise the hymn only makes reference to Indra.

The hymn is in some ways a twin to the following one, sharing vocabulary and thematics, but the second hymn provides only limited help in interpreting this one.

1. Extensive is the giving of your broad largesse, o Indra of a hundred resolves.
   So make ready to give to us brilliant things, you of good lordship who govern all domains.
2. What praiseworthy thing you appropriate as your nourishment, strongest Indra,
   that spreads itself as having the longest fame, difficult to surpass, o you of golden hue—
3. (As do) your tempests, which serve your will in profusion, o possessor of the stone.
   Both you gods rule over both heaven and earth to dominate them.
4. And (you rule) over this skill of yours, whatever it may be, for us, o Vṛtra-smasher.
   Bring manly power here to us: you are manly minded toward us.

5. Now through these dominating forces of yours (may we be) in your shelter.
   May we be provided with a good herdsman, o Indra of a hundred resolves; may we be provided with a good herdsman, o champion.

V.39 (393) Indra

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

As was already noted, this hymn is paired with V.38, sharing some vocabulary and themes, but this one is more coherent in both syntax and thought. The first three verses urge Indra to give in abundance, while in the last two (4–5) the poet urges his fellow Atris to praise the god.

1. What is given by you in profusion, bright Indra, possessor of the stone, that largesse bring here to us with both hands full, you finder of goods.
2. What you consider worthy to be chosen, that heaven-ruling thing bring here, Indra.
   Might we know you as the unbounded (ocean) for giving.
3. Your thought, famed and lofty, which is eager to give, should be realized.
   With it split apart even the strongholds for plunder to win, possessor of the stone.
4. Most bounteous of bounteous ones, the king of the settled domains,
   Indra (do I call) nearby for you [=Atris?] to eulogize. He takes pleasure in the hymns as well as the many (eulogies).
5. Just for him a poet's speech, for Indra a solemn word worthy to be pronounced;
   for him whose vehicle is the sacred formulation the Atris strengthen their hymns, the Atris beautify their hymns.

V.40 (394) Indra and the Myth of Svarbhānu [Anukramaṇī: Indra 1–4, Sūrya 5, Atri 6–9]

Atri Bhauma
9 verses: uṣṇih 1–3, triṣṭubh 4, anuṣṭubh 5, 9, triṣṭubh 6–8

This hymn falls into two parts. It opens with four verses praising Indra in his bullish aspect, with hypnotic repetition of the word *vṛ́ṣan* "bull." The remainder (vss. 5–9) contains an allusive account of the myth of Svarbhānu, who "pierces the Sun with darkness," and the Sun's rescue by the seer Atri, a myth much treated in middle Vedic literature. For extensive discussion of the myth and this Ṛgvedic version of it, see Jamison (1991: Part II, pp. 131–303).

The myth makes sense once the identity of the mysterious enemy of the Sun is solved: Svarbhānu, literally "he who possesses the radiance of the sun," is actually the Sun's earthly counterpart, the god Agni. He punished the Sun for the latter's incestuous intercourse with his daughter (not mentioned in this hymn, but frequently found elsewhere), but because of the importance of sunlight for the maintenance of the world, the Sun had to be restored by the seer Atri (also the supposed poet of this hymn) through ritual means. The physical manifestations of the Sun's punishment betray his attacker's identity: "pierced with darkness" refers to sunspots, dark spots on the sun as if burnt by fire, and the enveloping darkness of smoke is depicted in verse 6.

Note that the Svarbhānu portion (5–9) is a perfect omphalos hymn. The two outer verses (5, 9) are multiforms of each other and in a different meter from the verses in between; the middle verse (7) is the only direct speech; the intermediate vss. (6, 8) both mention Atri in the singular, both deal with the *māyā́* ("magic spells") of Svarbhānu, and both have complementary vocabulary: *diváḥ/diví, sū́ryam/sū́ryasya, gū́ḷhám/aghukṣat, bráhmaṇā/brahmā́*.

1. Drive hither. Drink the soma pressed with stones, you lord of soma—
   bullish Indra, with your bulls, best smasher of obstacles.
2. Bullish is the pressing stone, bullish the exhilarating drink, bullish this
   pressed soma here.
   Bullish Indra, with your bulls, best smasher of obstacles.
3. Bullish I call upon you, the bullish, o possessor of the mace, with your
   bright help.
   Bullish Indra, with your bulls, best smasher of Vṛtra.
4. Possessor of the soma-dregs, possessor of the mace, the bull overcoming
   the powerful, the tempestuous king, smasher of Vṛtra, soma-drinker—
   having yoked them, he will come hither with his two fallow bays. Indra
   will become exhilarated at the Midday Pressing.
5. When, o Sun, Svarbhānu Āsura pierced you with darkness,
   like a befuddled man not knowing the territory did the living beings
   perceive.
6. Then, o Indra, when you smashed down from heaven the circling magic
   spells of Svarbhānu,
   Atri with the fourth formulation found the sun, hidden by darkness
   because of (an act) contrary to commandment.
7. [The Sun:] "O Atri, let him not, deceived by jealousy and fear, swallow
   me, who am one of yours.
   You are an ally whose bounty is real; do you and King Varuṇa help
   me here."
8. The possessor of the sacred formulation [=Atri], having yoked the
   pressing stones, serving the gods with plain reverence, doing his
   utmost,

   Atri placed the eye of the sun in heaven. He hid away the magic spells of
   Svarbhānu.
9. Which sun Svarbhānu Āsura pierced with darkness,
   that one the Atris found, for no others were able.

The following series of hymns to the All Gods / All the Gods (V.41–51) contains some of the most complex and difficult poetry in the Ṛgveda (along with some restfully more straightforward hymns), including the hymn that Geldner called "the hardest hymn in the Ṛgveda" ("das schwierigste Lied des ṚV"), V.44. Although the placement of this series within the Saṃhitā was dictated by the strict and mechanical rules of numerical arrangement discussed before (see Intro. pp. 10–11), it is sometimes difficult for us not to view this set of hymns as a type of omphalos in the larger structure of the Ṛgveda. They are found in more or less the middle of Maṇḍala V (which has 87 hymns), which is more or less the middle maṇḍala of the Family Books (II–VII—keeping in mind that, though V is preceded by three maṇḍalas and followed by two, the preceding maṇḍalas are shorter: II–IV contain 163 hymns, VI–VII 179, remarkably close to equivalence). Just as the omphalos verse in a hymn contains the enigma, the mysterious message of the hymn, so we could view these All God hymns as the mystical center of the older Ṛgveda.

V.41 (395) All Gods

Atri Bhauma
20 verses: triṣṭubh, except atijagatī 16–17, ekapadā virāj 20

This hymn is quite intricate on the verbal level, though in paraphrase and in translation it may seem to lack interest. Every verse (but 17) names at least one divinity—many verses have several—chosen from among both the most prominent gods of the Vedic pantheon (e.g., Mitra and Varuṇa in vs. 1) and distinctly marginal figures like Āptya (vs. 9). There does not seem to be any one dominant god or set of gods: though the Maruts are mentioned more than any other gods (vss. 2, 5, 11, 13, 16), there is little particularly Marutian vocabulary or imagery. (It might be remembered, however, that the longest series of Marut hymns in the Ṛgveda, the Śyāvāśva hymns of remarkable poetic quality, immediately follow the All God hymns in this maṇḍala [V.52–61]). The content of the hymn as a whole seldom deviates from invitations to the sacrifice with promises of offerings, and prayers for divine gifts in return. Verses 16–17 are in a different meter and seem to be bringing the hymn to a close, especially 17, in which, as often, the poet makes a meta-reference to the hymn just concluded. If this is so, verses 18–20 are an afterthought.

The seemingly unordered series of gods who receive the honor of a verse (or part thereof) may exemplify a covert theme of choice or alternatives, underlined by the

use of the simple conjunction "or" (*vā*) as the verbal "hero" of the beginning of the hymn (vss. 1–3, returning at the end, vss. 15, 19).

Unfortunately other pieces of verbal play are essentially untranslatable, like the unusual sequence of two monosyllables at the end of the first half-verse of verse 1: . . . *vā dé* ("or . . . to be given"), which, scrambled, produces the target of the hymn: *devā(ḥ)* "gods."

1. Which one now, performing the truth for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa, is to be given (a good thing) from great heaven or one stemming from the earth
   or (one) at the seat of truth [=ritual ground]—you two should protect us—or which of you two (is ready) to give prizes to the sacrificer like the prizes for one who wins cattle?
2. They—Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Āyu, Indra lord of the Ṛbhus, and the Maruts—shall take pleasure in us,
   or (in those) who with reverences provide a well-plaited (hymn), a praise for Rudra who gives rewards—(they, the gods) in joint enjoyment.
3. You two Aśvins, driving quickest on the flight of the wind, in the flourishing of your chariotry, are to be summoned hither.
   Or (you priests), present a thought to the lord of heaven [=Rudra], like (soma) stalks to the worshipful.
4. The heavenly victor with Kaṇva as Hotar, (i.e.,) Trita from heaven, and the Wind, and Agni in joint enjoyment,
   Pūṣan, and all-nourishing Bhaga have come to the (ritual) presentation like those with swiftest horses to a contest.
5. Present your wealth of yoked horses; for help in the quest for wealth a visionary thought should be produced.
   The Hotar [=Agni] is well disposed because of the ways of (the company of) fire-priests, which are (also?) the ways of you powerful ones, o Maruts.
6. Set Vāyu, who hitches up the chariot, in front; in front the god, the inspired admirer, with your chants—
   (you,) aiming (straight), serving the truth, (set in front) the creators of plenty. Let them, (like?) good wives, create (plenty) here (in exchange) for our visionary thought.
7. I hasten to the two young maidens of heaven with your praiseworthy fortifying (hymns), with conspicuous chants.
   Night and Dawn, like ones who know all, through the days convey the sacrifice here for the mortal.
8. I chant for you to the men granting prosperity, to the Lord of the Dwelling-Place, to Tvaṣṭar, as I give;
   with reverences (I chant) to the trees, the plants, along with the rich Holy Place, in the quest for wealth.

9. Let the mountains behave like family, to thrust out progeny for us—they who are like good heroes.
   Āptya, admired, always worthy of our sacrifice, the manly one, will strengthen our laud in preeminence.
10. I have praised the embryo of the terrestrial bull, (as) Trita (has praised) the Child of the Waters with a well-twisted (hymn).
    Agni is sung with fortifying (hymns) like (a horse) at running. Flame-haired, he liquefies the trees.
11. How shall we speak to the great Rudrian (troop) [=Maruts]; what (shall we say) to observant Bhaga, for wealth?
    Let the waters and the plants help us, and Heaven, the woods, and the mountains whose hair is trees.
12. Let him hear our hymns—the lord of nourishments; he [=Agni] is the vigorous encircler, passing more quickly than a cloud.
    Let them hear—the Waters, resplendent like the fortifications of a mountain that encloses the offering ladles [=cows].
13. Just by our knowledge, o great ones [=Maruts], we shall say which are your ways, wondrous ones, as we acquire what is choice.
    And like birds, those of good essence [=Maruts] swoop down here in pursuit with their fluttering to the mortal held by murderous weapons.
14. I will call on the heavenly and earthly breeds and on the waters for the good battler (/very bounteous one) [=Indra].
    Let the days increase and the hymns tipped with gold; let the waters, the conquered floods increase.
15. Step after step old age has been secured for me, either (by her) who is the able Shielding Goddess or by the protectors.
    Let the mother, the great Rasā, accompany us along with our patrons, she with hands outstretched, with winnings outstretched.
16. How might we ritually serve with reverence those of good drops, the Maruts traveling their ways, at the invitation—the Maruts of advancing fame, at the invitation?
    Let Ahi Budhnya not set us up to suffer harm. For us let there be winnings at the distribution (of prizes).
17. In just these words now, for the sake of offspring along with cattle, the mortal (seeks to) win you, o gods—the mortal (seeks to) win you here, o gods.
    Otherwise Dissolution might swallow the secure depository beneficial to this body, my own old age.
18. Might we obtain that favor of yours, o gods, good ones, the nourishing refreshment of the cow, through (this) recitation.
    That gracious goddess of good drops [/gifts] should come toward us at a run, for our welfare.

19. Let Iḍā, mother of the flock, greet us, or let Urvaśī, along with the rivers.
    Or Urvaśī Bṛhaddivā, being sung, covering herself, (mother) of the (ritual) presentation, mother of Āyu,
20. Of the nourishing prosperity [/of the prosperity of Ūrjavya]—let her accompany us.

V.42 (396) All Gods

Atri Bhauma
18 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā virāj 17

Like the last hymn, this one enumerates a number of different gods to whom we direct our praise, beginning, as V.41 did, with Mitra and Varuṇa, and the concern, as in that hymn, is generally the ritual exchange of mortal praise for immortal gifts. Or such is the structure of the opening (vss. 1–6) and concluding (vss. 11–18) sections of the hymn. In the middle (vss. 7–10) Bṛhaspati (in vs. 10 with the Maruts) is called upon to be generous to generous patrons but to unleash destructive power against stingy patrons and non-sacrificers. As Hanns-Peter Schmidt has noted, these hostile actions are uncharacteristic of Bṛhaspati but typical of Indra, just as the association of Indra with the sacred formulation in verse 4 would be more expected of Bṛhaspati than Indra. He therefore argues (1968: 84–86) that verses 4–10 form a unity in this hymn, with Bṛhaspati serving as an epithet of Indra.

Although the gods in the enumerative verses are often named, some verses are riddles, describing the god without naming him (1cd, 6, 13, 14) or naming him only in the second half of the verse (3, 11). Such puzzles are common in All God hymns.

At the end of the hymn (vss. 14–17) the poet expresses the hope that his praise should reach in all directions, to all three worlds, creating wide space for him and his companions (in the final single-pāda verse 17). (Verse 18 is adopted from Aśvin hymns later in the maṇḍala [V.76.5, 77.5], perhaps to introduce the Aśvins, who are otherwise unmentioned, into this All God hymn.)

1. May the most availing hymn now reach Varuṇa with its visionary power; may it reach Mitra, Bhaga, Aditi.
   Let him hear it—the lord whose womb is the dappled (cow/ghee), who has five Hotars, whose path cannot be transgressed, who is joy itself [=Aryaman].
2. May Aditi grab hold of my praise, like a mother the beloved son of her heart.
   The dear sacred formulation that has been established by the gods, that is joy itself to Mitra and Varuṇa—may I (grab hold of it).

3. Rouse the best poet of poets. Wet him with honey, with ghee.
   He—god Savitar—will propel to us the golden goods that have been held forth and set out.
4. Through your thought, Indra, join us with cows, with patrons, with well-being, o possessor of the fallow bays—
   and with the sacred formulation established by the gods, with the favor of the gods who are worthy of the sacrifice.
5. God Bhaga, Savitar, Share of Wealth [/Aṃśa], Indra, the complete victor over Vṛtra and riches,
   the lord of the Ṛbhus, Vāja [=a Ṛbhu], and Plenitude—let the powerful immortals aid us.
6. We will proclaim the deeds of the one accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra], unopposable, victorious, unaging.
   None previous to you, bounteous one, nor later, nor anyone at all right now has achieved your manly power.
7. Praise the first conferring of treasure; (praise) Bṛhaspati, the winner of riches,
   who, the most wealful for him who chants and praises, will come here, with many goods, to the one who repeatedly invokes (him).
8. O Bṛhaspati, the bounteous ones accompanied by your help, who are invulnerable and possessing good heroes,
   who are givers of horses or givers of cows, who are givers of garments, the well-portioned ones [=patrons]—on them (confer) riches.
9. Dissipate the possessions of those who benefit by our hymns without giving.
   Those violating the commandments, grown strong at forward thrusting, the haters of the sacred formulation—keep them away from the sun.
10. Whoever lauds the demons at the invitation to the gods, run him over, Maruts, with your wheel-less (chariots).
    Whoever will scorn the labor of the one who labors for you, he will render his own desires empty when *he* sweats (at ritual labor).
11. Praise him, who has the good arrow and the good bow, who holds sway over every healing remedy.
    Sacrifice to Rudra for great benevolence; with acts of reverence offer friendship to the god, the lord.
12. The masters of the house, the workmen who have good hands [=Ṛbhus?], the wives of the bull, the rivers fashioned for wide extension,
    Sarasvatī, Bṛhaddivā, and Rākā—let the resplendent ones, showing favor, create a wide realm (for us).
13. I present to the great one who grants good shelter [=Tvaṣṭar] wisdom (in the form of) a hymn just newly being born,
    to him who, bulging [?] in the belly of his daughter, changing his forms [=Tvaṣṭar as father of Viśvarūpa?], made this (world? form?) for us.

14. May our lovely praise now reach to the thundering, bellowing lord of refreshment [=Parjanya], o singer—
to him who, rich in clouds, rich in water, sets in motion the two world-halves with his lightning, as he sprinkles them.
15. May this praise reach up to the Marutian troop, to the youthful sons of Rudra.
Desire calls me to wealth with well-being. Praise the unruly ones with dappled horses.
16. May this praise reach to earth, to the midspace, to the trees, to the plants, for wealth.
Let every god be easy for me to invoke. Let Mother Earth not set us in disfavor.
17. May we come to be in broad unconstricted (space), o gods.
18. May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy itself and provides good guidance.
Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all that brings good fortune.

V.43 (397) All Gods

Atri Bhauma
17 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā virāj 16

Like many All God hymns, this one enumerates in individual verses divinities deserving praise, and the emphasis is on the ritual and the gods' presence at and participation in it. There is perhaps more detail about ritual performance than in many such hymns (see, e.g., vss. 1, 3–7), and this focus on the ritual is observable in two other features of the hymn. On the one hand, the god Agni dominates the last part of the hymn (vss. 12–15), under the name/epithet Bṛhaspati in verse 12, unnamed but clearly identified by his characteristics in verse 13, called Āyu in verse 14, and finally named in verse 15ab. Such concentration on deified ritual fire in an All God hymn is somewhat surprising. Further, the middle verse of this hymn (excluding the repeated verses at the end), verse 7, is directed not toward a god but a ritual implement, the gharma pot, used in the Pravargya ritual and often the focus of priestly speculation.

1. Let the milk-cows, swift to their tasks, not neglectful, come close to us here with their milk, their honey.
For great wealth, the inspired poet, the singer keeps invoking the seven lofty (cows [=rivers?]), who are joy itself.
2. With lovely praise, with reverence Heaven and Earth are to be turned hither—they who are not neglectful with regard to the prize-contest.
The Father, the Mother who has honeyed speech and good hands—let the two glorious ones aid us in every bout.

3. Adhvaryus—having made the honeyed (drinks), present the pure dear (soma) to Vāyu.
Like the Hotar, drink first of this honey of ours, god; we have given it to you for your exhilaration.
4. The ten fingers and the two arms hitch up the stone—the two arms with good hands that are the laboring priests [/quellers] of soma.
The plant, well(-handled by) the fists, has milked out the sap of honey that dwells on the mountain, shimmering and pure.
5. The soma has been pressed for you who have enjoyed (it)—for will and skill, for lofty exhilaration.
Indra, bring nearby the two dear fallow bays, those amenable to the chariot-pole at the yoking to your chariot, when you are being invoked.
6. Hither to us, in agreement (with her), (bring) great Devotion [/Aramati], lady goddess, on whom the oblation is bestowed with reverence,
the lofty knower of truth—for the exhilarating drink of honey, bring her hither, Agni, along the paths the gods travel.
7. The one which the inspired poets anoint, like (the ritual grass) as they spread it, heating it with fire like (the offering of the sacrificial animal) with its omentum:
the truth-(sing)ing gharma (drink/pot) has been set here on the fire like the dearest son on the lap of his father.
8. Let the great, lofty, most availing hymn come like a messenger to invoke the Aśvins.
(O Aśvins,) joy itself, drive nearby on the same chariot; go to the treasury (of honey) as if to the chariot-pole, like the axle-pin into the wheel-nave.
9. I have shown forth an expression of reverence to the very strong, powerful Pūṣan and to Vāyu,
who are impellers of thoughts by reason of their bounty and treasure-givers of the prize in their own nature.
10. Convey all the Maruts according to their (individual) names, according to their (individual) forms, o Jātavedas, when you are invoked.
The sacrifice, the hymns, and the lovely praise of the singer—all you Maruts, all come (to these) with your help.
11. Hither to us from lofty heaven, from the mountain let Sarasvatī, deserving the sacrifice, come to the sacrifice.
Let the goddess, having enjoyed our call, turning toward the ghee, listen willingly to our capable speech.
12. Here on the seat make him sit—the ritual adept, dark-backed, lofty Bṛhaspati (as Agni).
Sitting on his womb, shining here in the house, golden-colored, reddish—(him) may we serve.

13. The enduring one belonging to lofty heaven, the bestower—let him come with all his succors when he is invoked—
clothing himself in his wives, the plants, not neglectful, a bull with tripartite horn, conferring vigor [=Agni].
14. In the highest, gleaming footstep of the mother of Āyu [=Urvaśī] the admiring abundant [?] ones have come.
With their oblations bestowed with reverence, they groom the beloved child [=Agni] in his dwelling place, like the Āyus.
15. Lofty vigor for lofty you, Agni, do those rivalrous (priestly) pairs, who reach old age through their insight, pursue.
Let every god be easy for me to invoke. Let Mother Earth not set us in disfavor.
16. May we come to be in broad unconstricted (space), o gods.
17. May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy itself and provides good guidance.
Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all that brings good fortune.

V.44 (398) All Gods

Avatsāra Kāśyapa, etc.
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 14–15

As noted above, Geldner considers this the hardest hymn in the Ṛgveda ("das schwierigste Lied des ṚV"), and a judgment very like this is shared by other scholars (e.g., Oldenberg, who deems most of it "uncertain or hopeless" ["meist fraglich oder hoffnungslos"]). Although in our opinion there are numerous contenders for "hardest hymn" in the Ṛgveda (X.106, for example, some of which appears to be written in unbreakable code), this one is certainly near the top of any such list.

The difficulties are found in every aspect of the hymn, beginning with the fact that the divine subject(s) of the various verses of the heart of the hymn are never identified. Then there are lexical problems: a number of rare words or hapaxes; morphological problems, including unusual inflectional and derivational morphology; syntactic problems such as frequent lack of verbs, unclear referents, unclear syntactic roles, and so on—not to mention a general lack of superficial coherence, both between verses and within verses. For all these reasons, the translation given is provisional in general and in many details.

Nonetheless, it is possible to form a hypothesis about what the hymn is "about," and this hypothesis allows one to interpret many of the ambiguities within this framework. Our translation reflects this hypothesis, and in a number of places bracketed identifications have been inserted to guide readers—though we have tried to keep these to a minimum, to avoid too much clutter in the poetry itself, which

despite its frequent lack of clarity possesses, in our opinion, both power and beauty, and to allow readers to produce their own interpretations of the hymn.

To be brief, the hypothesis with which we operate is that each verse is applicable to both Agni and Soma, the two crucial deified ritual substances, and therefore many of the verbal contortions are the result of attempting to produce phraseology that is meaningful for each god simultaneously. (This hypothesis is adumbrated by Geldner in his introduction to the hymn, where he suggests that some verses can be read with intentional double reference to Agni and Soma, though he clearly does not consider the whole hymn in this light.) The final two verses (14–15), in a different meter and almost mechanically responsive to each other, mention both Soma and Agni, and may be intended as an implicit answer to the riddle posed by the rest of the hymn. In any case, if our hypothesis is correct, the poem is the forerunner of the much later kāvya tours de force in which, for example, the plots of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are narrated at the same time.

The Soma/Agni simultaneity is especially prominent in the first part of the hymn. Toward the middle of the hymn (starting around vs. 8) another theme emerges, that of the poet learning his craft, seeking true speech. What unites the two themes is the sense that poetic inspiration comes from the ritual itself and from the mysteries of the identification of the two most important ritual substances, so that the poet gains his verbal mastery as the sacrifice progresses. But it is also the case that the sacrifice needs his poetry in order to be properly carried through, and so the poetic skill the poet gains from his contemplation of the mysteries of the sacrifice is put to use immediately in the next verses (9–11), and the result always desired by Ṛgvedic sacrificers, the epiphany of Indra on the sacrificial ground, is achieved in verse 12. Because of his contribution to the success of the sacrifice, the poet is lauded in the last verse (13) before the responsive solution to the riddle as the foundation of the whole sacrifice. Thus, the hymn is both a static meditation on a central sacrificial mystery and a roughly chronological progression through the sacrifice.

One of the enigmatic features of the hymn found throughout the hymn is the regular presence of unidentified feminine plurals (vss. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11), especially intriguing in verse 7. Identifying the likely referent(s) for these feminines as the hymn unfolds shows the developing complexity of the hymnic universe of discourse. In the earlier part of the hymn the feminines most probably refer, in the realm of Agni, to the streams of ghee offered into Agni (and also perhaps to the plants he burns)—while, in the realm of Soma, to the waters that swell the soma stalks and to the cows' milk mixed with the pressed soma. As the figure of the poet joins the hymn, the feminines can have a third set of referents, the insights that provide him with poetic inspiration and the words/songs that result from them. (All of the underlying nouns in all three referential systems are feminine in gender and conceptually female.) This complex web of reference is beautifully (or dauntingly) on display in verse 11. In our reading of this verse all three sets of feminines are not bound, that is, not in use, when the soma is being brought to the ritual and the sacrifice has not yet started. But when soma the plant is made into soma the exhilarating

drink, all three sets of feminines are hitched up: the poet's words are recited, the streams of milk approach the pressed soma, and the streams of ghee are poured into the fire. The priests direct the various females to their appropriate goals, and at the end of the ritual they are "unhitched."

As an aside, we might mention what appears to be a sly joke, located in almost the middle of the hymn (minus the final riddle-solving verses): in 6a, after five verses of exhausting enigmas with many more to come, the poet says, "Just as he appears, so is he said (to be)"—an assertion about the transparent clarity of the subject that the frustrated audience may view with bitter irony. However, it is of course not merely a joke, for the poet's task is to find the hidden mystical truths of the universe and express them in true words, in *bráhman*. No matter how superficially baffling, the *bráhman* captures how "it really is," and so the poet asserts here.

Although numerous puzzles remain in the hymn, we hope to have shown that it is far from "hopeless." It can be read as a consistent unity (though the unity we see may not be the only possible one), and, as so often with complex hymns in the Ṛgveda, it is a meditation not only on the ritual but also on poetic craft.

1. Him—in the primordial way, in the earlier way, in every way, in this way here—(him who is) preeminence (itself), who sits on the ritual grass and finds the sun,
   him facing toward (our) community will you milk out with song, the swift one conquering (the cows? the waters?), among whom you grow strong.
2. Lovely to be seen for beauty are those (tips [of flame/soma streams]), which are the sun of the lower (realm). (As the possessor) of (those) tips who shines forth (even) for the one who doesn't impel (largesse),
   you are a good herdsman, not for deceiving, o strong-willed one. Far beyond the trickeries of magic your name was (set) in truth.
3. The steed does the oblation follow (and) its [=oblation's] elements are true; the Hotar who goes without harm brings might.
   Always stretching out along the ritual grass, the bullish child, the unaging youth is placed in the middle with his outgrowth.
4. These (hymns?) of yours, easy to yoke, (go) forth on their course to seek the twinned sisters [= butter offerings/waters], strong through truth, that (go) downward toward yonder one [=Agni/Soma],
   with reins easy to control, directing everything. Krivi [=Agni/Soma/the poet (<kavi)?] steals (their) names [=butter offerings/waters?] at their precipitous fall.
5. Quivering with your powers of endurance (toward) the one covered with little "twigs" that grasps (you) at the pressing [=firewood/sheep's fleece?], resounding among the clearly pregnant (females [=plants/waters/cows]),
   you beautify yourself at the recitations for the streams, o you with a straight song. Wax strong over the wives, (you who are) alive in the ceremony.

6. Just as he appears, so is he said (to be): They united (him) with his effective shadow in the waters—
   (him) who wins wideness for us—(wins) the great (earth), the broad expanse, and lofty immovable might that brings good heroes.
7. (When) unwed, he pursues (women); once he has wives, he truly out(strips) (all) contenders with a mind that seeks conflict—(as) the sun, the sage poet.
   He with his goods near at hand will vanquish the (sun's) heat and will win shelter for us, which protects (our) patrimony on all sides.
8. He [=poet] pursues the older sonority of the seers by means of (you [=Agni/Soma]), the beacon of this arrangement [=sacrifice]. Among which (females [=waters/cows/insights]) your name (is),
   in whatever (place) it has been set, he will find it [=sonority of the seers] through his industry. He who makes the journey by himself, he will get it right.
9. The foremost of these (females) has stepped down into the ocean (of soma). The pressing is not harmed into which she is guided.
   Here the heart of the working poet [?] does not tremble, where the thought is found that is his bond to the purified (soma/fire).
10. For he (has a bond) with the insights of the mental lordship of the one deserving the sacrifice, who speaks just so and aims toward the same goal.
    With the delightful (poems) [/lusty (warriors)] of the stealthy one we shall win the most expansive prize, to be brought to success only by the wise.
11. (While still) a falcon, (soma) is unboundedness for these (females [=poems/waters/cows]); (when it becomes) the exhilarating drink, it is their girding—for the one deserving the sacrifice, provided with all desirable things, master of artifice.
    They [=priests] make (the females) set their goal to go to one after the other (of Soma and Agni) in turn. They know (that) unharnessing and drinking in rounds (are) at hand.
12. The one worthy of the sacrifice, always granting, has smashed away hatreds. "Twisted" (here) by the arms [=activity (of you, the priests)], finding (the praise) that is heard, he is surpassingly in partnership with you.
    He [=Indra] comes in response to both the choice ones [=Agni and Soma], and he is radiant when he has a share in the troop [=Maruts] with their (chariots?) that drive forth easily.
13. Bearing the pressed (soma) of the sacrificer, master of the settlements, he [=poet] is the udder, the ladle of all visionary thoughts.
    He bears the (two) milk-cows [=Heaven and Earth, or Agni and Soma]; the milk, full of sap, has been brought to perfection. The one who recites following (his teacher), he learns, not the one who sleeps.

14. Who stays awake, him the verses desire; who stays awake, to him go the melodies.
Who stays awake, to him does this Soma say: "I am at home in fellowship with you."
15. Agni stays awake: him the verses desire. Agni stays awake: to him go the melodies.
Agni stays awake: to him does this Soma say, "I am at home in fellowship with you."

V.45 (399) All Gods

Sadāpṛṇa Ātreya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A lovely hymn, both narrating the opening of the Vala cave by the power of the Aṅgirases' poetic speech and welcoming the dawn of a new day and the sunrise on that mythic model. The hymn begins (vss. 1–3) with a description of sunrise, with no overt mention of the myth, though it clearly lurks in the background. The poet is concerned to apply the mythic model to the current sacrificial situation. He initiates the ritual in verse 4, and then in the two, paired, middle verses in the hymn (5–6), an omphalos, he exhorts his priestly comrades to achieve the poetic vision (*dhī*) that has served others well in the past. The particular past he has in mind becomes clear in the following two verses (7–8), which depict the opening of the Vala cave and the Aṅgirases' role in it. The next two verses first pray that the Sun will come up (9) and then announce that he has arisen (10). The exhortations in verses 5–6 have worked! In the last verse (11) the poet (addressing himself, as well as his priestly colleagues) exults over this success: "the poetic vision that wins the sun," the same one that the Aṅgirases possessed, has now been acquired, and it will bring welfare to the community. It is noteworthy that Indra, the usual hero of the Vala myth, is not mentioned in connection with it (though he does make an appearance in vs. 4); presumably the poet wishes to identify himself and his priestly comrades with the chorus of Indra's associates, the Aṅgirases, rather than with the god.

A brief grammatical digression is necessary here in order to show the particular artfulness of this hymn. As noted, the first three verses already describe, in some detail, the dawn and the sunrise, and so it might be thought that the sunrise in verse 10 is an anticlimax. But a remarkable fact about the first three verses is that the description of the sunrise there is couched almost entirely in the verb form known as the injunctive, which has no overt marker of tense. Although its default interpretation is past tense, it can be used also to depict "timeless" events. (Since English lacks such a verbal category, we have used the present tense here.) The sunrise in verses 1–3 is both the mythic model of the Vala-Aṅgiras narrative and, more important, the *ideal* sunrise to which the poet aspires. In contrast to the insistent

injunctives in these verses, when today's sunrise, the successful result of the sacrificers' and poet's efforts, is depicted in verse 10, all four verb forms have the overt marker of past tense, the so-called augment, making it clear that the sunrise there has indeed (just) occurred. Another example of Ṛgvedic poets' sensitivity to grammatical categories and their ingenious deployment of them.

1. Through knowledge unloosing the stone of heaven with hymns—the shining (beacons) of the approaching dawn come (out of it)—
he uncloses (the doors) to the enclosures: the Sun comes up. The god has opened up the doors belonging to the sons of Manu.
2. The Sun unlooses his beauty like an ensign; the mother of the cows [=Dawn], recognizing (the way), comes here from the pen.
The rivers (of light) have floods (broad and high) like plains, have floods that chew (their banks). Heaven becomes firm like a well-fixed pillar.
3. In response to this hymn here the womb of the mountain (gapes open) for the primordial birth of the great ones [=dawns].
The mountain gapes open; heaven achieves success; desiring to win the earth, they [=poets/Aṅgirases] exhaust themselves.
4. With well-spoken words pleasing to the gods, Indra and Agni are now to be called upon by you for help,
for with solemn speeches sage poets of good sacrifice who desire to win always sacrifice to the Maruts.
5. Come on now! Today let us become possessed of good poetic vision. Let us send misfortune forth a wide way away.
Let us put hatreds aside in the distance; let us go forward to the sacrificer.
6. Come on! Comrades, let us create (the same) poetic vision with which the mother opened the enclosure of the cow,
with which Manu conquered Viśiśipra, with which the wandering merchant reached the overflowing source (of goods?).
7. The (pressing) stone, guided by the hand, bellowed there, the stone along with which the Navagvas sang for ten months.
Saramā, going after the truth, found the cows; the Aṅgiras made all things real.
8. When all the Aṅgirases roared along with the cows at the brightening of this great (dawn),
at the fountainhead of them [=cows], in the highest seat, Saramā found the cows along the path of truth.
9. Let the Sun drive here with his seven horses to the tract of land stretching widely at (the end of) his long course.
Let the quick falcon fly to the stalk and the youthful poet shine as he goes among the cows.

10. The Sun has mounted the gleaming flood, now that he has yoked his golden, straight-backed (horses).
    Like a boat through the water the wise ones guided him; the waters, giving heed, stood still nearby.
11. You have acquired the poetic vision that wins the sun in the waters, with which the Navagvas passed ten months.
    Through this vision may we be those who have gods as our herdsmen; through this vision may we pass beyond constraint.

V.46 (400) All Gods

Pratikṣatra Ātreya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 2, 8

Renou pronounces this hymn "banal," and certainly the long enumeration of divinities, listed with little or no characterization or action, does not engage the audience in the same way that the intricacies of the previous All God hymns in this maṇḍala do. However, there are two features of note in the hymn, and these features have, in our view, a covert connection. The hymn ends with two verses praising the Wives of the Gods in general and particular gods' wives by title: Indrāṇī, Agnāyī (wife of Agni), Aśvinī, Varuṇānī (vs. 8); the Wives (of the Gods) are also mentioned in verse 2, and other goddesses are also featured in the hymn: Sarasvatī (vs. 2), Aditi (vss. 3, 6), the Waters (vs. 3), the Rivers (vs. 6). The second feature is that the first verse is very different from the rest—the invocation of divinities only begins in verse 2. In verse 1 the 1st-person poet-sacrificer describes himself as hitched to a chariot-pole and, despite the effort involved, does not wish to be released from this yoking.

Now it is certainly possible that the yoking image only refers to the poet-sacrificer's usual tasks at the sacrifice. However, in conjunction with the emphasis on the gods' wives (*pátnīḥ*) later in the hymn, we suggest that what this hymn is ever so delicately concerning itself with is an important and controversial innovation: the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife (*pátnī*) as a necessary participant in the ritual. As has been argued elsewhere (Jamison 2011, forthcoming a and b), though the Sacrificer's Wife is a fixture already in early middle Vedic ritual (see Jamison 1996a), there is no evidence for her participation in early Ṛgvedic ritual. The introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife in the middle to late Ṛgveda (presumably beginning with only one or a few priestly circles) seems to have been, understandably, controversial, and though it is not referred to directly in the text, there are covert arguments, pro and con, in a number of hymns. One of the important images of the new ritual pairing of Sacrificer and Wife is that of a pair of draft-animals jointly yoked to a chariot-pole (e.g., VIII.33.18, X.102.10), pulling the sacrifice together, though with the husband maintaining a slight edge in strength and effort. It seems quite possible that this image is found in verse 1: the male yoked to the pole, pulling a feminine

referent (the chariot-pole, which is grammatically feminine, but also secondarily the wife), and with no desire to return to the old state of affairs. The last word in this verse, *neṣati* "he will lead," reminds of the priestly title, Neṣṭar "Leader," the priest whose duty it is to lead the Sacrificer's Wife around the sacrificial ground in later śrauta ritual; he is already marginally represented in the Ṛgveda as a leader of the Wives of the Gods (see especially I.15.3).

If this scenario is correct—that verse 1 represents an argument in favor of the new model of sacrifice including the Sacrificer's Wife—then the lists of gods that follow might be a form of insurance. Every possible divinity is called upon to witness and give tacit approval to the innovation. And the Wives of the Gods, who provide the divine model for the Sacrificer's Wife, are called on especially insistently to come to the sacrifice and provide their help and support.

1. I, a knowing one, have yoked myself like a courser to the chariot-pole; I draw it [/her=ritual wife], which [/who] furthers (the sacrifice?) while seeking help.
   I do not desire to be released from it [/her], nor to turn back here again. The knowing one who goes in front will lead straight along the paths.
2. O Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, (All?) Gods, o Marutian troop and Viṣṇu—provide!
   Both of the Aśvins, Rudra, and the Wives (of the Gods), Pūṣan, Bhaga, Sarasvatī shall enjoy themselves.
3. Indra and Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa, Aditi, the Sun, Earth, Heaven, the Maruts, the Mountains, the Waters—
   I call on (and on) Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, Brahmaṇaspati, also on Fortune, Laud, Savitar, for help.
4. And may Viṣṇu and Wind—the unfailing ones—the Treasure-Giver and Soma create joy for us.
   And may the Ṛbhus and Aśvins, and Tvaṣṭar and Vibhvan, consent to wealth for us.
5. And may there come to us here this Marutian troop, dwelling in heaven, worthy of the sacrifice, to sit on the ritual grass.
   May Bṛhaspati and Pūṣan provide to us shelter for defense, and Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.
6. And may these mountains, receiving good praises, and the very bright rivers be (there) for our protection.
   May Bhaga, the apportioner, come here with capacity (and) help. Let Aditi of broad extent hear my call.
7. The Wives of the Gods—let them willingly help us; let them help us to propagate, to win prizes.
   (You) who belong to the earth, (you) who (live) under the commandment of the waters, you goddesses, receiving good invocations, give shelter to us.

8. And let the ladies, the Wives of the Gods pursue (the offering)—Indra's wife, Agni's wife, the Aśvins' queen.
   Let Rodasī and Varuṇa's wife pay heed. Let the goddesses pursue (the offering), which is the regular season for women.

V.47 (401) All Gods

Pratiratha Ātreya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Each verse in this short hymn presents a riddle: a description of a god or divine force whose name is withheld till late in the verse (1, 2) or suppressed entirely (3–6). This is not an uncommon tactic in All God hymns—a particularly deft example is VIII.29. This hymn presents several twists on this device. First, the characterizations seem regularly intended to mislead. For example, verse 1 has a feminine subject, and given the actions ascribed to her, the audience would expect the subject to be Dawn. But instead it is (Poetic) Inspiration (*manīṣā́*), here identified as the mother of Dawn (presumably because early-morning ritual poetry awakens Dawn and impels her to appear). Again, the attributes of the subject in verse 2 suggest Agni's flames, but the actual referent, the last word of the verse, is "Paths." Second, the riddles get harder as the hymn progresses. As was already noted, in verses 1 and 2 the solution is given, but thereafter it is not. In verse 3 the solution is fairly obvious by the end of the verse, but in verse 4 it is less so. Verse 5 announces itself as an enigma, and it seems to have double application to both the Sun and Agni. There is no agreed upon solution for verse 6.

Although this observation is unconnected to the riddle structure just discussed, each verse (but 5) has a form of *div/dyu* "heaven" (mostly *diváḥ*) (vs. 5 has *d(u)vé* "two," which is phonologically close). The final pāda of the hymn is an "homage to Heaven." Although this homage was not prepared thematically in the hymn, it was prepared verbally, by the repetition of the stem in various syntactic and semantic contexts.

1. Hitching up, she comes from heaven, she who is called the great mother of the Daughter (of Heaven [=Dawn]), waking (men),
   seeking to win, the youthful one, (coming) from the fathers, constantly calling in the seat (of the sacrifice)—(she is) Inspiration.
2. The nimble ones, hastening at their work, having mounted the nave of the immortal one,
   the endless, broad ones encircle heaven and earth on all sides—(they are) the Paths.
3. (He is) a bull, the sea, a reddish eagle (that) entered the womb of the age-old father.
   The dappled stone deposited in the middle of heaven strode across (the sky); he protects the two ends of the airy realm: (the Sun).

4. Four bear him, affording rest; ten give the infant suck, for (him to) move.
   Threefold are his highest cows; they circle around the ends of heaven in a single day: (Agni?).
5. Here is the wonder, the enigma, people: that the rivers move, but the waters stay,
   that two, other than his mother, bear him—the two were born hither and yon but are twins, of the same lineage: (Sun and Agni).
6. They stretch out their insightful thoughts, their (ritual) labors (as warp) for him; the mothers weave garments for their child.
   The bulls, delighting in coupling, go to their wives along the path of heaven.
7. Let this, o Mitra and Varuṇa, let this (hymn), o Agni, be luck and lifetime for us; let it be recited here.
   Might we obtain a fording place and firm standing. Homage to Heaven, the lofty seat.

V.48 (402) All Gods

Pratibhānu Ātreya
5 verses: jagatī

Another enigmatic hymn, made more baffling (as in a number of All God hymns in Maṇḍala V) by the lack of named referents for the descriptive phrases. There is certainly no consensus among scholars about these referents or about the purpose and structure of the hymn; indeed, a number of scholars consider this a "fragment." We find this unlikely, however. The fact that the most difficult verse by far is the middle one (3) suggests that this is an omphalos hymn, and moreover the final pāda (of vs. 5) is typical of a hymn ending.

In our opinion the hymn is appropriate to an early-morning ritual, and the two main referents are Dawn (/Dawns) and Agni. It begins with a typical rhetorical question: what poem to compose for the establishment of the ritual fire at dawn? The second half of verse 1 and first half of verse 2 present striking images of dawn (/dawns) breaking, ending verse 2 with a standard meditation on the aging that every new day brings to mortals. This thought is continued in verse 3, though the focus passes to Agni, who day after day at the ritual prepares the mace for Indra when Indra is present at the sacrifice, while the recurrent dawns mark the passage of time. Agni as the ritual fire remains the subject of the remainder of the hymn (vss. 4–5), with his identity becoming clearer and clearer.

1. What shall we compose for the self-ruling, self-glorious great one [=Agni?] for his own dear establishment,
   when the mistress of artifice [=Dawn?], choosing the waters in the dark cloud of the variegated dusky realm, stretches them forth.

2. They [=Dawns] have spread their hero-strengthening tracery along the same course through the whole dusky realm.
   A man devoted to the gods drives away the backward-facing (dawns) ever behind (him), and lengthens (his life) with those in front.
3. Along with the pressing stones, through (the periods) of the day and through the nights, he [=Agni?] sprinkles [=prepares] the best mace, when the master of artifice [=Indra?] (is there)—
   while into his own [=Agni's] house (the Dawns?) proceed by the hundred: rolling up the days, they unroll them (again).
4. I have looked upon this stream(ing) of his [=Agni], like (the swing) of an axe; I have looked upon his face, for the enjoyment of his form,
   when concurrently he establishes a treasure like a dwelling place abounding in food for the clan whose cry is "carry (the day)."
5. The four-faced one stretches with his tongue out straight, wearing pleasing (garb), putting the stranger in place (as) Varuna (does).
   We do not know, because of our human state, that (source?) from which Bhaga and Savitar will give what is choice.

V.49 (403) All Gods

Pratibha Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This hymn picks up where the previous hymn ended, with the gods Savitar ("Impeller") and Bhaga ("Fortune") and their bounty to mortals. These two gods are the topic of verses 1 and 2 here, and the first four (of five) verses concern the distribution of treasures to men, with a widening circle of gods responsible for these gifts. The context (as vs. 3 makes especially clear) is the distribution of dakṣiṇās (priestly gifts) at the early-morning ritual. Verse 5 asks for more general blessings than just wealth, but in its references to the "formless void" and to "wide space," it also seems to depict dawn, which creates visible and articulated space from formlessness.

1. I hasten toward god Savitar for you today, and toward Bhaga who apportions the treasure of Āyu.
   I would also turn hither you two superior men, who bring many enjoyments—seeking companionship with you, o Aśvins, day after day.
2. In response to the advance of the lord, as a knowing one offer friendship to god Savitar with hymns.
   A discerning one should call on (him) with reverence and on the preeminent one who apportions the treasure of Āyu.

3. Traveling to those lacking gifts, (each god) distributes valuables—Pūṣan, Bhaga, Aditi—at the dawning of the ruddy (Dawn).
   Indra, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni—the wondrous ones beget lucky days.
4. Then Savitar without assault is our defense, then the nurturing rivers follow suit,
   when, as Hotar of the ceremony, I call upon (them). May we be lords of wealth, with prizes as our treasure.
5. Those who have presented such great reverence to the good ones, who possess well-spoken speech for Mitra and Varuṇa,
   let the formless void go away (from them); make a wider space (for them). With the aid of Heaven and Earth may we rejoice.

V.50 (404) All Gods

Svastyātreya Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This little hymn is surprisingly beset by difficulties, especially of syntax, reference, and meter. A particularly intricate set of syntactic constructions modulates from the singular "everyman" of verse 1, through an indefinite plural 3rd person, also representing men in general ("they" 2ab), to an identification of those indefinite men with "us" (2cd)—all of whom desire wealth and the companionship of the god "Leader," identified by the later tradition with Savitar (whom we met in V.49), though this identification is not necessary.

The scene shifts to the sacrifice in the next two verses (3–4), and the "we" of verse 2 becomes the "you" in verse 3, exhorted to do honor to the gods and their wives as guests at the sacrifice. The identities remain off-balance, however: the verb used for "honor" is one whose subject is usually a god and whose object a mortal, so role reversal is implied. And the gods are not identified as "gods," but rather called "men"—using the word *nṛ́*, which refers to especially elite, noble, or worthy men, and is often elsewhere applied to gods. Verse 4 depicts the mythic model of the soma sacrifice, with Indra invigorated by soma to be a winner. This leads us back to god Leader and prayers for wealth and well-being in response to our ritual offerings (vs. 5).

1. Every mortal would choose the companionship of the god Leader.
   Every one aims at wealth and would choose brilliance, in order to thrive.
2. They are yours, god Leader, as are the ones who (set out) to mimic them.
   As those—for they are to be infused (with good things)—may we be accompanied by wealth, by (other) desirable accompaniments.
3. Therefore, (all of you,) show favor here to the superior men [=gods] as our guests, also to their wives.
   Let the repeller repel into the distance anything standing in the path and (all) hatreds.

4. When the harnessed draft-animal will run, the beast seeking the wooden cup [=soma],
the manly minded one [=Indra], with a dwelling full of heroes, (will) win the floods, like wise (thoughts?).
5. This Lord of the Chariot is yours, god Leader. Luck (be) Wealth—
luck (be) for wealth, luck for well-being! Let us conceive praise songs as refreshment; let us conceive praise songs for the gods.

V.51 (405) All Gods

Svastyātreya Ātreya
15 verses: gāyatrī 1–4, uṣṇih 5–10, jagatī or triṣṭubh 11–13, anuṣṭubh 14–15

The last of the All God hymns in Maṇḍala V, this hymn is far too long (fifteen verses) for the position it holds, after a series of five-verse hymns. It is also not unified metrically. It likely originally consisted of separate hymns, verses 1–4, 5–7, 8–10, with 11–15 as a later addition.

Both in content and form, all the segments are simple, predictable, and closely tied to the soma-drinking of various gods, especially those appropriate to the morning soma-pressing. This collection of strictly liturgical verses provides a curious finale to the highly wrought, intellectually challenging, and deeply serious All God hymns in this collection.

1. O Agni, to drink of the pressed (soma), come here with all your helpers, with the gods, for the giving of oblations.
2. (All of) you whose insights are truth, whose ordinances are real, come here to the ceremony.
Drink with the tongue of Agni.
3. You comrade, inspired poet—come here with the inspired poets, the early-traveling
gods, to drink the soma.
4. Here is the soma, pressed in the cup, poured around in the basin—
the one dear to Indra, to Vāyu.
5. Vāyu, relishing (them), drive hither to pursue (the oblations), for the giving of oblations.
Drink of the pressed stalk to your satisfaction.
6. Vāyu and Indra, you have the right to the drinking of these pressed (soma drinks).
You flawless ones, relish them to your satisfaction.
7. The pressed soma drinks mixed with curds are for Indra and for Vāyu.
Like rivers to the deep, they go to satisfaction.
8. Jointly with all the gods, jointly with the Aśvins, with Dawn,
drive hither, Agni. Take pleasure in the pressed soma, as (you did) at Atri's.

9. Jointly with Mitra and Varuṇa, jointly with Soma, with Viṣṇu,
drive hither, Agni. Take pleasure in the pressed soma, as (you did) at Atri's.
10. Jointly with the Ādityas, with the Vasus, jointly with Indra, with Vāyu,
drive hither, Agni. Take pleasure in the pressed soma, as (you did) at Atri's.
11. Well-being let the Aśvins, let Fortune mete out to us; well-being let the goddess Aditi, let the unassailable ones.
Well-being let lord Pūṣan establish for us; well-being let Heaven and Earth, with kind attention.
12. For well-being we shall call upon Vāyu, on Soma; well-being (let him mete out) who is lord of creation.
On Bṛhaspati with his whole flock (we shall call) for well-being. For well-being let the Ādityas be there for us.
13. Let all the gods be there for us today, for well-being; let Vaiśvānara, Vasu, Agni (be there) for well-being.
Let the gods, the Ṛbhus give aid for (our) well-being. With well-being let Rudra protect us from constraint.
14. Well-being, o Mitra and Varuṇa, well-being, o rich Path.
Well-being for us (let) Indra and Agni—well-being, o Aditi, make for us.
15. With well-being we would follow along our path, like the Sun and the Moon.
May we meet up with one who gives in return, who does not smite, with one who knows.

Maṇḍala V contains the largest collection of Marut hymns in the Ṛgveda, V.52–61, plus V.87. The ten sequential hymns, 52–61, attributed to Śyāvāśva Ātreya, are poetry of the highest order—inventive, exuberant, and beautifully crafted—and they capture both aspects of the Maruts: their social existence as a sort of Männerbund, a group of young, handsome, high-spirited warriors, and their naturalistic existence as personifications of the monsoon/thunderstorm—without losing sight of their divinity and the benefits they provide to men.

V.52 (406) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
17 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 6, 16–17

As befits the first hymn in this Marut cycle, the poet Śyāvāśva addresses himself with an exhortation to praise the Maruts in the first pāda of the first verse. He then

describes them in a general fashion and asserts their right to the sacrifice, in a short ring-compositional introduction (vss. 1–5). (For the responsions of verses 1 and 5 as an example of "poetic repair," see Jamison 2006.)

The next section of the hymn (vss. 6–13) depicts the Maruts as the gods of the thunderstorm in a series of vivid images and also fancifully assigns individual names to them (vss. 10–11)—the Maruts are otherwise undifferentiated—ending with another exhortation to the poet to praise them (vs. 13cd). In the last few verses (14–17) ritual honor is given to the Maruts, and they respond with gifts. The last verse (17) resembles a dānastuti, but with the Maruts, rather than humans, as the donors to the poet; they were already identified as "patrons" (*sūrí*) in the two preceding verses (15–16).

The density of imagery throughout is remarkable; we will give just one example, from verse 9. There the Maruts are said to "clothe themselves in wool in the Paruṣṇī River." The "wool" must stand for foam, off-white and fluffy like newly shorn wool. But the river foam is yet another metaphorical substitute for something else, namely clouds, which the Maruts as storm gods would be clothed in—all of this conveyed in an economical half-verse.

1. Śyāvāśva, chant forth boldly—along with the Maruts possessing chants,
   who rejoice in [/cheer on] undisguised fame according to their own nature, those worthy of the sacrifice.
2. For they are comrades of steadfast strength—boldly.
   Bold on their drive, by themselves they protect each and every one.
3. They, like streaming bulls, spring across the nights.
   Then the Maruts' might in heaven and earth we ponder.
4. Among the Maruts we would establish your praise and sacrifice—boldly—
   who all, through human (life)spans, protect the mortal from harm.
5. The deserving ones possessing good drops [/gifts], men who are not half-strength,
   to the Maruts of heaven chant forth—(chant) a sacrifice for those worthy of the sacrifice.
6. (Arrived) here with brilliants, here with battle, the lofty men have launched their spears.
   Following them (came) the lightning flashes—following the Maruts like giggling (girls). The radiance of heaven has arrived by itself.
7. Those who have grown strong as earthlings, who in the broad midspace, or in the precinct of the rivers, or in the seat of great heaven—
8. Exalt the Marut troop, of real strength, ingenious.
   The men, streaming, hitch up by themselves for beauty.
9. And they clothe themselves in wool [=foam] in the Paruṣṇī (River)—they (like) preening water-birds—
   and with the wheel-rim of their chariots they split the stone with force.

10. "On the Path," "Off the Path," "Within the Path," "Along the Path"—with these names they vaunt themselves to me at the bestrewing of the sacrifice.
11. Then they vaunt themselves as "men (come) down"; then they vaunt themselves as "teams";
    then as "those from afar." Their bright forms are worthy to be seen.
12. Chanting in rhythm, seeking water, (like) light-weights they pranced to the wellspring.
    They (seemed indistinct) to me like who knows who, like thieves (concealed), but the helpers (then) came to glitter in my sight.
13. Which lofty ones, whose spears are lightning flashes, are (also) sage poets, ritual adepts—
    to this Marut flock, o seer, do homage and bring it to a halt with song.
14. To the Marut flock, o seer, (approach) with a gift, as a maiden being given (in marriage) (approaches) her ally [=spouse?].
    Or from heaven do you, bold ones, praised with poetic thoughts, speed with strength.
15. Now (a man) paying mind to them, (who approaches) to the gods as if to udders,
    he would keep company with a gift, through (the auspices of) the patrons famed on the course [=Maruts] and by their unguents.
16. Those who proclaimed the cow to me on my seeking (their) lineage, the patrons called Pṛśni their mother,
    then they called their father arrow-possessing Rudra—(they) the skillful ones.
17. Seven upon seven the able ones gave me hundreds, one (hundred) each.
    At the Yamunā (River) a famous thing—I swept up bounty in cattle; swept down bounty in horses.

V.53 (407) Maruts

Śyāvāsva Ātreya
16 verses: kakubh 1, bṛhatī 2, anuṣṭubh 3, puraüṣṇih 4, kakubh 5, satobṛhatī 6–7, gāyatrī 8, satobṛhatī 9, kakubh 10–11, gāyatrī 12, satobṛhatī 13–14, kakubh 15, satobṛhatī 16

A metrically complex hymn, though there is no reason to consider it a composite. The internal groupings, mostly two-verse units, follow those suggested by Oldenberg (1888: 106–8). The hymn mingles descriptions of and wishes for the Maruts' journey here with descriptions of the storm and the desirable rain the Maruts bring, and indeed the Maruts and the rains are sometimes identified, sometimes modulate from one to the other.

The hymn opens (vss. 1–2), as often, with questions—what is the origin of Maruts and where have they gone? The Maruts themselves answer, indirectly, in verse 3, and demand praise, which is forthcoming in verse 4. The description of a storm follows (vss. 5–7), and the Maruts are urged to come here with their rains (vss. 8–11). The poet returns in verses 12–13 to the question raised at the beginning: to what sacrificer have the Maruts gone? The hope is of course that they have come or will come to us, and the blessings we wish to receive are detailed in the final verses (14–16.)

1. Who knows their birth? Or, who was previously in the graces of the Maruts,
   when they yoked their own spotted (female antelopes)?
2. Those mounted on their chariots—who heard (them)? How did they drive?
   Toward what good giver, (what) friend, did they flow along (as) friends, (as) rains (flow) with their refreshments?

3. They say to me—those who drove hither through the days along with the birds, in exuberance,
   the men, unblemished young bloods: "When you see them here, praise them!"
4. Who in their unguents, who in their axes have their own radiance—and in their garlands, in their brilliants, in their spangles,
   with splendor in their chariots, in their bows.

5. It is following your chariots (when they come) that I take my place for delight, you Maruts of lively drops [/lively gifts],
   (I delighting) like the heavens (following the waters) when they come with their rain.
6. When the men of good drops [/gifts] have stirred the bucket of heaven here for the one doing pious work,
   they send the thunder(storm) surging out along the two world-halves; along the wasteplaces come the rains.
7. The rivers, having bored with their gush through the dusky realm, have flowed forth like milk-cows,
   like horses that have streamed from the road at their unharnessing, when the dappled females turn aside.

8. Drive hither, Maruts, from heaven, from the midspace, and from nearby.
   Do not stay away at a distance.
9. Let not the Rasā (River), the Anitabhā, the Kubhā, the Krumu, let not the Sindhu bring you to a halt.
   Let not the overflowing Sarayu hem you around. On us alone let your favor be.

10. Your troop of chariots, the glittering Marut flock of newer ("hymns" [=thunderclaps])
    do the rains come following after.
11. Your every troop of these (chariots), every swarm, every flock, with good chants
    we would stride after, with poetic thoughts.

12. To what well-born one, who had given an oblation, have they driven forth today
    along this course—the Maruts?
13. —Along which (course) you convey the imperishable granular seed to offspring and descendants.
    Establish for us what we implore you for: generosity through our whole lifetime and good fortune.
14. May we cross over beyond scorners through your blessings, having left behind imperfection and hostilities.
    When it rains, the waters are luck and lifetime; at dawn they are medicine. May we be together with (them/you), o Maruts.

15. Well provided with gods and with heroes in every way will that mortal be
    whom you protect, o men, o Maruts. May we be those (mortals).
16. Praise the benefactors of the praiser on the journey of this (flock). They will take pleasure as cows do in a pasture.
    Invoke them as they go, like old comrades. With song sing (to) those who desire it.

V.54 (408) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 14

One of the most intensely descriptive of the Marut hymns, with shifting images of the violent thunderstorms and welcome rain that they provoke. There is no particular progress or development in the hymn, just the succession of exuberant descriptions. The last three verses (13–15) shift to prayers for the Maruts' gifts and help.

1. Forth—for the Marut troop with its own radiance I will anoint this speech, for (the troop) shaking the mountains,
   for (the troop) with the rhythm of the gharma pot, sacrificing on the back of heaven, of heaven-bright fame—sing (forth) their great manliness.

2. Forth, o Maruts, (go) your forceful, water-seeking, vigor-increasing, horse-yoked, swirling (chariots?).
They join with lightning; Trita [/the third (heaven)] bellows. The waters resound, swirling in their streambed.
3. With lightning as their might and stones as their missiles, the superior men, the Maruts, turbulent as the wind, shaking the mountains,
(though) just with a desire to give water, roll hailstones in an instant—(they) with thundering onslaught, violent, overpowering.
4. Through the nights, o Rudras, through the days, you skillful ones, through the midspace, through the dusky realms, you shakers,
through the fields when you drive, like boats (through the water)—through (all these places) of difficult going, o Maruts, you never suffer harm.
5. This is your heroism, your greatness, o Maruts: it stretches across a long wagon-trek [=measure of distance], like the sun.
(You are) like antelopes on your journey, with ungraspable brilliance, when you have overrun the mountain that does not give horses [/gives non-horses (=cows?)].
6. When the heaving troop has flashed, o Maruts, you will plunder the tree like a caterpillar, you (ritual) adepts.
Then in concert you will lead Proper Thinking [/Aramati] to us along an easy way, like the eye (of the sun? of the traveler himself?) (leading) the traveler.
7. He is not conquered, o Maruts, nor is he slain, nor does he fail, nor waver, nor suffer harm,
nor do his riches give out, nor his help—the seer or the king whom you will "sweeten."
8. The Maruts have teams (of horses) like men who conquer in roving bands; they have (water) skins [=clouds] like hospitable (householders):
they swell the wellspring. When the strong ones have sounded, they inundate the earth with the stalk of honey.
9. This earth slopes gently for the Maruts; heaven becomes gently sloping for them when they go forth;
the paths of the midspace slope gently; gently slope the mountains of lively drops.
10. While—you Maruts of equal gravity, you sunlike men, you men of heaven—you become exhilarated when the sun has risen,
your horses certainly never slacken as they run. In a single day you reach the far limit of this road.
11. On your shoulders spears, on your feet spangles; on your breasts brilliants, o Maruts, on your chariot charms.
Lightning bolts with the flash of fire in your fists, golden (helmet-)lips stretched out on your heads.

12. The vault whose brilliance is ungraspable for the stranger do you, Maruts, shake for the gleaming fig [=rain].
The communities huddle together when (the Maruts) have grown turbulent. The truth seekers sound an extended cry.
13. May we be the charioteers of the vigorous wealth given by you, discriminating Maruts,
which does not stay away (from us), any more than Tiṣya [=Dog Star] from heaven. By us enjoy (wealth) in thousands, Maruts.
14. You, Maruts, (aid) our wealth consisting of coveted heroes; you aid the seer inspired in his melody.
You (establish) a charger and a prize for Bharata; you establish a king with attentive hearing.
15. For this treasure I beseech you, you of immediate aid, by which we will extend (our control) over men like the sun.
Take pleasure, Maruts, in this speech of mine, by whose enduring power may we pass through a hundred winters.

V.55 (409) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

The first nine of the ten verses in this hymn end with a refrain, "as they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along," which sets the theme of the hymn. Rather than focusing on the thunderstorm and its accompanying rain (mentioned only incidentally in vs. 5), as in the last few Marut hymns, this one primarily concerns their journey through the midspace. The hymn ends with a few verses (9–10) of invitation to the sacrifice and prayers for benefits.

1. The Maruts, worshiped at the forefront of the sacrifice, with glinting spears and brilliants on their breasts, assumed their lofty vigor.
They speed with their horses, swift but easy to control. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
2. You yourselves assumed your power, as you know (how). Loftily, you great ones, widely do you reign [/shine forth].
And through the midspace they measured themselves with their strength. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
3. Born all at once, good in essence, grown all at once, just for splendor the men increased even further,
shining forth like the rays of the sun. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
4. Your greatness is to be emulated, o Maruts; the sight of you is desirable to see like the sighting of the sun.

And establish us in immortality. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

5. You raise (water) from the sea, o Maruts; you make the rain rain, you overflowing ones.
Your milk-cows do not wear out, you wondrous ones. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

6. When you have yoked your dappled (mares as) horses to the chariot-poles and you have fastened on your golden cloaks,
all rival contenders do you disperse, o Maruts. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

7. Not the mountains, not the rivers obstruct you. Where you have set your attention, Maruts, you go just to that.
And around heaven and earth you drive. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

8. What previously, Maruts, and what now—what is spoken and what is recited,
of all that you become cognizant. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

9. Be merciful to us, Maruts; do not slay us. To us spread out ample shelter.
Give study to our praise song, our fellowship. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

10. Do you lead us to a better (state), away from dire straits, Maruts, when you are being hymned.
Enjoy our oblation-giving, you who deserve the sacrifice. May we be lords of riches.

V.56 (410) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
9 verses: bṛhatī, except satobṛhatī 3, 7

Unlike the previous Marut hymns, this one introduces—and indeed begins with—other personnel besides the Maruts. The first word in the hymn is a vocative addressed to the god Agni, and he (or perhaps the poet) is addressed elsewhere in the hymn (vss. 2, 5). The Earth appears in verse 3 as a literally battered woman, a remarkable image, and this female figure anticipates that of Rodasī, frequent companion and consort of the Maruts, in verses 8–9.

The poet repeatedly calls the Maruts to come here: the forms "I call," "we call," and "calls" frame and punctuate the hymn (vss. 1, 2, 5, 8, 9), while the invocation of Agni at the beginning and the description of Agni in verse 7 establish the sacrifice as the goal of their journey. But it is the verses describing the journey itself (especially 3–4) that are the most memorable part of this hymn.

1. O Agni—the vaunting flock, emblazoned with brilliants, with unguents, the clans of the Maruts I call down here today, even from the luminous realm of heaven.

2. Just as you [=Agni? poet?] conceive with your heart, in the same way my hopes have gone.
Those who will come closest to your calls, strengthen them of fearsome appearance.

3. Like (a woman) with a generous (lover), Earth, beaten aside (by your onslaught) [/sexually penetrated], being ecstatic, (seems to) recede from us.
Like a bear is your strenuous onslaught, o Maruts, fearsome like a headstrong ox.

4. Those who liquefy (the trees) with their strength, at will, like oxen averse to the yoke,
even the reverberant stone, the mountain, the peak do they shake on their journeys.

5. Rise up(, o Agni? poet?)—now with praises for these who have grown strong together.
I call the (flock) of the Maruts, best of many, which no one can precede—(call the flock) like a swarm of cows.

6. Yoke your reddish (mares) to your chariot; yoke the chestnuts to your chariots.
Yoke the two nimble fallow bays to the chariot-pole, to pull—the two best pullers to the chariot-pole, to pull.

7. And *this* reddish racehorse here [=Agni], powerfully noisy, has been set here to be seen.
Let him not make you too long on your journeys, o Maruts: spur him forth on the chariots.

8. The Marutian chariot, seeking fame, do we now call here,
on which there stands, bearing great delights, Rodasī in company with the Maruts.

9. This troop of yours, beauty on the chariot, vibrant, inviting admiration do I call here,
in which the noble, well-portioned (Rodasī) shows her greatness, the generous one in company with the Maruts.

V.57 (411) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7–8

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one introduces other personnel besides the Maruts, though not ones tied specifically to the sacrifice. The hymn begins by

addressing the Maruts by their father's name, "o Rudras," a vocative that returns in verse 7. Their mother Pṛśni also figures in the hymn, in verses 2 and 3. The first verse also describes them as "accompanied by Indra" (*índravantaḥ*). It is notable how rarely Indra is mentioned in hymns dedicated to the Maruts, even though they are his sidekicks and supporters from an Indraic point of view. In the whole Marut cycle in Maṇḍala V this is the only appearance of Indra, and it is tellingly phrased: Indra is himself treated as a sidekick, demoted into a possessive adjective: "possessing/accompanied by Indra." It is ordinarily the Maruts who have this grammatically subordinated role: the adjective *marútvant* ("possessing/accompanied by the Maruts") is very common and regularly modifies Indra.

In this hymn, then, the Maruts are defined first by their parentage and their companion. The other elements that define them are their attributes, both physical and mental, lists of which are given in verses 2, 4, 5, and 6, constituting a virtual iconography of the Maruts in verbal form. This listing modulates imperceptibly into the beginning of verse 7, a list of goods possessed by the Maruts that they have give to the singers, a subtle way of moving to the requests of the final verses (7–8).

The vivid description characteristic of Marut hymns is not absent here. See especially verses 2–3, with the Maruts as the storm.

1. O Rudras—accompanied by Indra, of one accord, with your golden chariots, come here for good faring.
   Here is a poetic thought from us for you to yearn toward, like the wellspring of heaven for a thirsty man seeking water.
2. You with your axes, your spears, your inspired thoughts, with your good bows, your arrows, your quivers,
   you possess good horses, good chariots, you whose mother is Pṛśni.
   Possessing good weapons, you drive in beauty, Maruts.
3. You shake heaven and the mountains for goods for the pious. The trees duck down with fear at your journey.
   You make the earth quake, you whose mother is Pṛśni, when, o powerful ones, you have yoked the dappled (mares) for beauty.
4. The Maruts—having the wind's turbulence and a cloak of rain, quite alike in appearance like twins, well-ornamented,
   having tawny horses and ruddy horses, unblemished, projecting power, wide like heaven in their greatness.
5. Possessed of many droplets [/banners], of unguents, of good drops, whose appearance is turbulent, whose gifts are not withdrawn,
   noble by birth, with brilliants on their breasts, chant(er)s of heaven, they share an immortal name.
6. Spears are on your shoulders, Maruts; might, strength, power placed in your arms.
   Manly forces on your heads, weapons on your chariots. All splendor has been emblazoned on your bodies.
7. Rich in cows, in horses, in chariots, in good heroes, in gold—(such) largesse you have given to us, Maruts.
   Make good our eulogy, Rudras. Might I have a share in your divine help.
8. – Hail, Maruts, superior men! Be merciful to us—o you of great bounty, immortal, knowing the (immanent) truth,
   hearing the realized (truth) [=poetic formulations], sage poets, youths, belonging to the lofty mountains, loftily growing.

V.58 (412) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Another pleasing Marut hymn with the typical mixture of storm imagery (see esp. vss. 6–7) and portrayal of a wild but beneficial Männerbund. In this latter capacity, the Maruts are seen as the source of various earthly counterparts (vs. 4). Another common theme, the lack of distinction among the various members of the band, is also mentioned (vs. 5). As in V.56.3 a sexual relationship between the Maruts and the Earth is depicted (vs. 7), though without the shock value of the earlier passage.

1. Now will I praise this (flock) full of power, their Marutian flock of newer (hymns [=thunderclaps]),
   those possessing swift horses who drive themselves impetuously and who as self-rulers are masters of the immortal—
2. The turbulent, powerful flock with bangles on their hands, of boisterous commandment, masters of artifice, granting wishes,
   who are joy itself, immeasurable in their greatness. O poet, extol the powerfully generous men.
3. Let the water-conveyors come here to you today, all the Maruts who speed the rain.
   This fire which is kindled here, o Maruts, enjoy it, you sage poets, youths.
4. You beget for the people a take-charge king, fashioned for distinction, you who deserve the sacrifice.
   From you comes the fist-fighter, quick with his arms, from you the one of trusty horses and good heroes, o Maruts.
5. Just like wheel-spokes, there is no last one; like the days they keep arising, not stingy with their mighty powers.
   The sons of Pṛśni, highest, wildest—the Maruts have equipped themselves with their own poetic thought.
6. When you have driven forth with your dappled mares, your horses, with your chariots with their firm wheel-rims, o Maruts,
   the waters surge; the trees dissolve; let the ruddy bull, the Heaven, roar down.

7. Even the Earth has spread herself at their journey. Like a husband an embryo, they have implanted their own strength (in the earth).
Certainly they have yoked the winds as horses to their yoke-pole; they have made their own sweat into rain—the Rudras.
8. – Hail, Maruts, superior men! Be merciful to us—o you of great bounty, immortal, knowing the (immanent) truth,
hearing the realized (truth) [=poetic formulations], sage poets, youths, belonging to the lofty mountains, loftily growing.

V.59 (413) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8

This hymn is constructed around a series of similes and metaphors, some of which (see esp. 3a) push the boundaries of similarity and require a mental leap from the audience, while in others (e.g., 3d) the near identity between the two entities compared renders the simile-marking almost redundant. The hymn's subject, as usual, is the power of the Maruts on their travels, power manifested both as the storm and as a warriors' onslaught. The puzzles in this hymn begin with its opening: no entirely satisfactory referent for the "scout" or "spy" of 1a has been found, though many have been suggested.

1. Your scout has stridden forth, to give good faring. I will chant to heaven. I proffer my truth [=hymn] to the earth.
They sprinkle the horses, passing through the dusky realm. They let their own radiance slacken with floods (of rain).
2. In fear of their onslaught the Earth trembles. Like a loaded boat she streams, going a wayward course.
They who, visible from afar, are conspicuous on their travels, the men have taken their places amid the great rite of distribution.
3. (Your) horn, like (those) of cows, stands tallest for splendor; (your) eye is like the sun in his surging through the dusky realm.
Like steeds of good quality, you are pleasing. Like young bloods, you are conspicuous for splendor, o men.
4. Who can reach up to the great things of you great ones? Who to your poetic skills, Maruts, who to your manly deeds?
You set the earth to quivering like a dustmote, when you press forward, to give good faring.
5. Like reddish horses [=flames of fire] they are of the same lineage, like champions in the vanguard, they have fought in advance.
Like very strong young bloods, the men have grown strong. They confound the eye of the sun with their rains.

6. They, bursting forth with no oldest one, no youngest, no middle, have grown forth in their greatness.
Noble by birth, having Pṛśni as mother, young bloods of heaven—come here to us.
7. They who, like birds in formation, have flown with their strength to the ends of heaven from (heaven's) lofty back—
their horses, as both (races [=human and divine]) know, have stirred forth the spurting (waters) of the mountain.
8. Let heaven bellow, let Aditi (come) to pursue our (oblations). Let the dawns, bright with drops, take their places together.
These have stirred the heavenly bucket hither—o seer—the Maruts, (sons) of Rudra, being hymned.

V.60 (414) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7–8

Like V.56, this hymn begins with an invocation of Agni, the ritual fire, who is also conspicuously addressed along with the Maruts in each of the last three verses (6–8). The prominence of Agni identifies the Maruts' journey to and participation in the sacrifice as the goal of the hymn. Their journey itself provokes the usual cosmic reactions—fear and trembling (vss. 2–3)—and the dazzling beauty of the Maruts also receives its usual expression (vs. 4). Verse 5 provides an almost domestic picture of their parentage. Notable also is the dicing imagery in verse 1.

1. I solemnly invoke helpful Agni with reverences. Seated in front, he will pull out a perfect ("hand" of dice) for us.
I press forward as if with chariots seeking prizes. With respectful circumambulation (of Agni) might I bring to fulfillment the praise of the Maruts.
2. Those who have mounted on the famed dappled mares, on the well-naved chariots—the Rudras, the Maruts—
even the trees duck down with fear of you, powerful ones. Even the earth trembles, even the mountain.
3. Even the mountain, grown great, has fear; even the back of heaven trembles at your roar.
When you are at play, o Maruts, equipped with spears, you run toward a single goal like the waters.
4. Just like wooers coming from wealth, with golden (ornaments) they have emblazoned their bodies through their own powers.
For splendor the very splendid ones, powerful on their chariots, all together have furnished themselves marks of greatness on their bodies.

5. Without an oldest one, without a youngest, these brothers have grown strong together for good fortune.
   Their father (was) the youth, the skillful Rudra, and Pṛśni their good-milking (mother); day-bright (are the days) for the Maruts.
6. If you are in the highest heaven, o Maruts, or in the middle one, or if you are in the lowest one, you of good fortune,
   from there, o Rudras, or you now, o Agni, be cognizant of this oblation of ours, when we will perform sacrifice.
7. O Maruts, affording all possessions, and Agni too—when you (Maruts) drive yourselves from higher heaven along (its) backs,
   exulting, boisterous—(all) you who have care for the stranger, establish a thing of value for the sacrificer who presses soma.
8. O Agni, with the Maruts, the versifiers in their beauty, drink the soma, you exulting along with those who are splendor in a flock,
   along with the pure Āyus who set all in motion, o Vaiśvānara, along with your age-old beacon.

V.61 (415) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
19 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 5 and satobṛhatī 9

With its nineteen verses, this hymn is out of place by the normal rules of arrangement of the saṃhitā. It also falls into several sections on thematic grounds (vss. 1–4, 5–10, 11–16, 17–19). However, at least the first half (1–10) displays the cleverness and sly humor of Śyāvāśva, who names himself directly in verse 5 and punningly in verse 9, and perhaps represents a jeu d'esprit of the poet, appended to the more solemn Marut hymns that precede it. Note that Śyāvāśva names himself only in the first of those hymns (V.52.1) and in this last one.

The Maruts are the clear subject of verses 1–4 and 11–16, and each of these sections is followed by a dānastuti, or verses culminating in a dānastuti: 10 and 17–19. We therefore suggest that we are dealing here with two originally separate hymns, 1–10 and 11–19, and that the first at least bears clear marks of Śyāvāśva's authorship.

Since the second of these is less interesting than the first, we will discuss it first here. The six verses (11–16) treating the Maruts are fairly conventional. Verse 17 serves as a transition to the dānastuti, addressed, oddly, to the goddess Night, who is urged to carry the poet's hymns to his patron, called Dārbhya here, and Rathavīti in the following two verses. Both parts of the latter name are punned upon: *ratha* "chariot" in verse 17 ("like a charioteer"), *-vīti* "pursuit" in verse 18 in the verb form (*ápa*) *veti* "go off track," and he is praised for his generosity in general terms (19).

The first hymn is a much less staid affair. The four opening verses to the Maruts begin with questions about the Maruts and then in increasing detail about their horses and horse-tackle. And in verses 2c and 3b the Maruts are depicted as riding horseback (one of the very few pieces of evidence for this activity in the Ṛgveda); in verse 2 the reference is unremarkable, but in verse 3 the men's posture on the horse reminds the poet of women spreading their thighs in sex (or possibly childbirth, though this seems less likely). From this point on the hymn takes a sexually suggestive turn. In verse 4 the Maruts are sent off with "lucky women," and we move abruptly into the second section of the hymn.

That section ends with a real dānastuti verse (10) in praise of a patron named Vaidadaśvi. We might expect the four preceding verses (5–9) to form part of the dānastuti as well, and there are prominent dānastuti-like elements in them, but they also subvert the dānastuti model or provide a counter model—not least because they concern a woman and profess the unorthodox opinion that women can be superior to men. Verse 5 introduces an unidentified woman who "gains" the sorts of things poets usually receive in dānastutis, using the root for "gain" (*san*) that is standard in such contexts. (The notion that a woman would be in such a position is so unusual that most translators simply translate the word as if it means "give"—though a woman who *gives* livestock is no more standard a figure than one who *gains* it.) From the second half of the verse it is clear that she must be the favored consort (perhaps even the "Favorite Wife" of later Vedic ritual) of Śyāvāśva's patron. The poet then seems to reflect (vss. 6–8) on the qualities of women in general, in contrast to men, allowing that some women may actually be better than men, especially men of bad character—and among those especially a stingy man (vss. 6, 8), who doesn't deserve to be called a man except in the technical matter of blood money (vs. 8). The tone in these verses is colloquial and conversational. After this seeming digression, with the subtle hint to his patron about the perils of stinginess, we return in verse 9 to a flesh-and-blood woman, who is working her wiles on the poet, who calls himself "Dusky" (*śyāva*). The verse is an elaborate pun: on the one hand she is narrating the course of a race, and the "two chestnuts" in the second half of the verse can be two horses given to the poet, "straining forward" to win. But the tone is very intimate; the "course" may be the progress of sexual intercourse between the girl and the poet, and the second half of the verse, using the same verb (*ví √yam* "spread apart") as in the first sexually suggestive passage in verse 4, can describe the "spreading apart" of two female body parts. The girl in verse 9 thus appears to be part of the "gift" that Śyāvāśva received for his poem, and the complex set of double meanings in this verse are certainly a worthy "praise of this gift." Is the girl in this verse the same as the one in verse 5? Śyāvāśva seems to imply this, but we will never know for sure.

1. Who are you, men, the fairest ones, who one by one have driven here from the farthest distance?
2. Where are your horses, where your reins? How have you been able? How have you driven here?
   (Where is) the seat on their back, the bridle at their nostrils?

3. (Where) the whip on their haunch? The men have spread apart their thighs (on horseback),
like wives at the making of sons.
4. Go forth, heroes, you young bloods with lucky women,
so that you will be hot as fire.

5. She gains livestock in horses and cows and (livestock) consisting of a hundred sheep—
the one who keeps plumping up her arm as a pillow for the hero praised by Śyāvāśva.
6. Now a woman can be more reliable, better than a man
if he's estranged from the gods, ungenerous—
7. While she pays attention to a famished man, or to a thirsting one, or to one who has desires [/lust],
and sets her own mind upon the gods.
8. And some other guy, a niggard not deserving praise, (may be) called a "man,"
but he is only equivalent (to a man) in the matter of wergeld.
9. But a young woman, having beguiled (me), whispered the course to me, "Dusky" [=Śyāvāśva], face to face.
The two chestnuts spread apart [/strained forward] for the much-rewarded one, for the inspired poet of lasting glory—
10. Whoever will give me a hundred milk-cows as Vaidadaśvi (did),
(he is) like a victor in his munificence.

11. (The Maruts), who drive themselves with their swift horses, drinking the exhilarating honey,
here they have acquired their fame.
12. With whose splendor they flash through the two world-halves on their chariots, like the bright ornament in heaven above.
13. This youthful Marutian flock with its glittering chariot is not to be scorned;
charging to beauty it is unrepulsable.
14. Who now knows about them, where the shakers are reaching elation,
those born of truth, unblemished?
15. You, who seek admiration, are those who lead the mortal forth with an insight right to the point,
are those who listen to his invocations on your journey.
16. You who care for the stranger—roll here to us desirable, greatly shimmering goods,
you who deserve the sacrifice.

17. This praise of mine, o Night, carry off to Dārbhya,
(my) hymns (carry away) like a charioteer, o goddess.

18. And then speak for me thus to Rathavīti who has pressed the soma:
"My desire does not go off track."
19. This Rathavīti dwells in peace, a bounteous patron throughout the cow-rich (clans) [/along the Gomatī River],
set back among the mountains.

V.62 (416) Mitra and Varuṇa

Śrutavid Ātreya
9 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn calls on Mitra and Varuṇa for rain, as 3cd makes clear. Their ability to send the rain is connected with their kingship, and the poet suggests that connection in several images. The gods' throne sits "within the libations" (vss. 5, 6), which not only are the oblations made to them but also signify the rainwater. The banner that increases through their commandment (vs. 5) is the banner "of the ruler" (cf. V.69.1), and here the rain is the emblem of their kingship. Their rule is strong, supported by a thousand pillars (vs. 6), but the pillar of their throne is also the lightning (vs. 7ab) that accompanies the rain, and its foundation is in land that yields plants (vs. 7c).

Framing the rain, which is the subject of verses 2–7, is the sun (vss. 1, 8). The first verse remains mysterious. The first hemistich places Mitra and Varuṇa's "enduring truth" in the night sky or in any case, in that place where "they," most likely the gods generally, unhitch Sūrya's horses to let them pasture during the night. Yet even before dawn the poet's vision allows him to see "that One," the sun, and together with the sun, the hidden truth of the two gods. The sun may also be the "single felly" mentioned in 2d, and if so, the verse looks forward the appearance of the sun after the rain. After the invocations to the gods for rain, the sun returns to the poem once again, this time visible to all at dawn and closely associated with the golden throne of Mitra and Varuṇa.

1. Your enduring truth is hidden by truth, there where they unhitch the horses of the sun.
Ten times a hundred [=rays of the sun?] stand together: I saw that One, the most splendid of the lovely forms of the gods.
2. That is surely your greatness, Mitra and Varuṇa: while standing at rest, they have given milk throughout the days.
You two swell all the pasture's streams of milk. The single felly has turned here after you two.
3. You upheld the earth and heaven, o you two kings, Mitra and Varuṇa, by your great powers.
Make the plants grow! Swell the cows! Send the rain gushing down, o you of lively waters!

4. Let the horses in good harness convey you here. Let them with guided reins come near to this place.
   A cloak of ghee whirls along after you. From of old, rivers flow near.
5. Guarding (the commandment) that increases your famed, broad banner, as if guarding the ritual grass with a yajus-recitation,
   you sit upon the throne amid the libations, o Mitra and Varuṇa of firm skill, receiving homage.
6. You are the two far-protectors with unbloodied hands for him who performs rituals well, whom you two safeguard, Varuṇa, amid the libations.
   Never becoming angry, you two kings together bear a thousand-pillared rule.
7. Metal cloaked in gold, its [=the throne's] pillar flashes in heaven like a horsewhip,
   anchored in the good or fruitful land. We would win honey upon your throne.
8. You two mount the throne possessing golden color at the break of dawn, (the throne) possessing a metal pillar at the rising of the sun,
   o Mitra and Varuṇa. From there you observe guiltlessness and guilt.
9. Your very stout, unbroken protection, which is not to be pierced, o you herdsmen of the living world, bringing good waters—
   with that help us, Mitra and Varuṇa. Seeking to win, may we be victorious.

V.63 (417) Mitra and Varuṇa

Arcanānas Ātreya
7 verses: jagatī

Like the previous hymn to Mitra and Varuṇa, this hymn is also a plea for monsoon rains. It gives a vivid picture of the monsoons with their thunder and lightning (vss. 5, 6) and the coming of the rain (esp. vss. 1, 4). The poet uses sound repetition, perhaps in imitation of echoing thunder or recurring lightning or perhaps simply as a demonstration of his poetic ability: 2d...*-vī ví caranti*..., 3b...*vícarṣaṇī*, 3c *citrébhir*..., 4b *carati citrám*..., 5c...*citrā́ ví caranti*..., 6b...*citrā́m vadati tvíṣī-*..., and 7d...*-vi citryam*.... Also across 3ab *samrā́jā ugrā́ vṛṣabhā́ divás pátī, pṛthivyā́ mitrā́váruṇā vícarṣaṇī*, the two lines have exactly the same metrical structure and repeated vowels in the same syllables.

The hymn several times refers to the *māyā́*, the "cunning" of Mitra and Varuṇa (vss. 3, 4, 6, 7), which in its first and last attestations is described as the "cunning of a lord (*ásura*)" (vss. 3, 7), thus connecting Mitra and Varuṇa's ability to control the rain by their cunning with their kingship. They are likewise twice called "sovereign kings" (*samrā́j*) (vss. 2, 3). The prefix *sám-* "together," signifying their unifying rule, contrasts with the repeated prefix *ví-* "apart," which indicates the diverse things over which they hold sovereignty. This theme is announced in 2ab, where they are called *samrā́jau* over the world *vidáthe* "in its division."

Also translated and discussed in Brereton (1981: 104–6).

1. O herdsmen of the truth, o you whose nature holds true, you two stand upon your chariot in the most distant heaven.
   For him whom you two help here, Mitra and Varuṇa, the rain swells rich in honey from heaven.
2. As sovereign kings, you two of sunlike appearance rule over this living world in its division, o Mitra and Varuṇa.
   We implore the gift that is rain, that is immortality. Thunder ranges through Heaven and Earth.
3. Sovereign kings, powerful bulls, and lords of heaven and of earth, Mitra and Varuṇa, who know no boundaries—
   you two approach the roar with shimmering clouds. You make heaven rain by the cunning of a lord.
4. Mitra and Varuṇa, your cunning rests upon heaven. The sun, your light, moves as a shimmering weapon.
   You hide it in heaven by cloud and by rain. O Parjanya, the honeyed drops are arising.
5. The Maruts harness their easy-running chariot for beauty, like a champion on cattle raids, o Mitra and Varuṇa.
   Thunder ranges through the shimmering air. O sovereign kings, sprinkle us with milk from heaven.
6. O Mitra and Varuṇa, Parjanya speaks his refreshment-bringing word, shimmering and shattering.
   The Maruts clothe themselves in clouds by your cunning. Make heaven rain, ruddy and spotless.
7. According to your nature, o Mitra and Varuṇa who perceive inspired words, you two guard your commandments by the cunning of a lord.
   By truth you rule over the whole living world. You place the sun here in heaven as your shimmering chariot.

V.64 (418) Mitra and Varuṇa

Arcanānas Ātreya
7 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 7

As often, the central verse of the hymn is its most enigmatic. The poet condenses this verse so that a number of interpretations are possible, all of them applicable to

the situation. The word *upamá*, here translated "closest," might also mean "best." Indeed, most translators choose the latter interpretation, but in the verses leading up to this one, the poet constantly emphasizes the intimacy of Mitra and Varuṇa: In their arms they gather "the realm of solar glory" (vs. 1), which is likely both the celestial realm and the realm of the sacrifice. They stretch forth their arms to the sacrificers, who call on their affection (vs. 2). The sacrificers are accompanied by the protection of Mitra, "who never does injury" (vs. 3). In verse 4 the poet brings something close to the gods, although he does not state clearly what it is. In the more obvious reading it might be the sacrificial offerings and the sacrificial recitations. But it might also be gifts to the priests, or the inhabitants in the patrons' dwellings, or the talent and learning that the priests bring to the ritual performance. In short, it might be everything that is part of the sacrifice or even part of the lives of the patrons and priests.

In the final verses this theme of the closeness of Mitra and Varuṇa to the sacrificers is expressed through a number of different strategies. The simile in 7cd is particularly striking. It turns on two homophonous present stems *dhāva*, one of which means "run" and the other "rinse, cleanse," with the shift from one to the other signaled by the change from "feet" to "hands." This word play maintains the sense of closeness of the sacrificers and the gods, since "cleanse" refers to a typical priestly action, while "run" is the desired action of the gods. That theme continues in verses 4 and 5, in which the poet invites Varuṇa and Mitra to the dwelling of generous patrons, which is also the gods' "seat" or "abode" (vs. 5). And verse 6a begins *yuvā́ṃ naḥ* "you two for us," setting the 2nd- and 1st-person pronouns next to one another.

1. With our verse we summon for you all Mitra and Varuṇa, who cares for the stranger,
   who, like corrals, have encompassed the realm of solar glory in their two arms.
2. Let these two arms stretch forth with kind attention to him who chants,
   for again and again, in all places of the earth, I call on your benevolent affection.
3. That I might now reach the way, I would travel by the path of Mitra.
   They go together with the protection of him [=Mitra] who is dear, who never does injury.
4. Mitra and Varuṇa, with my verse I would set closest to you two
   what is in the dwelling of generous patrons and what serves praise singers to contend over.
5. O Mitra, (you) and Varuṇa—(come) here for us with your bright lights, here into your seat,
   into their own dwelling, (that) of the generous patrons, for your partners to grow strong.
6. For us, among whom you two maintain your dominion (here) and aloft, o Varuṇa—

   for us make wide space to win the prize for the sake of wealth and well-being.
7. While (Dawn) with her shining cattle is breaking at the (sacrifice) under divine dominion,
   do you two worthy of the sacrifice run to me here by foot, as if (cleansing by hand) soma pressed by priests with skilled hands, o you two superior men, as you maintain Arcanānas.

V.65 (419) Mitra and Varuṇa

Rātahavya Ātreya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 6

The poet begins by invoking himself as the "perceptive" poet (vss. 1–2), who then speaks on behalf of the sacrificers (vs. 3). The basic theme of the hymn is the request that Mitra and Varuṇa help create a peaceful dwelling place that is broad and secure for people and animals during the period that the tribe is settled. While the poet addresses both Mitra and Varuṇa, his principal address is to Mitra: Mitra alone is mentioned in verse 4, in verse 5 Varuṇa appears only as the complement of Mitra, and in verse 6 Varuṇa's presence is merely implied in the dual personal pronoun. Mitra is the god of alliances, and the reason for the focus on Mitra here is that the poet particularly wants people to occupy their proper places (vs. 6) by honoring their agreements with one another. The verb √*yat* "arrange" in this verse is elsewhere associated with the action of Mitra, who governs peoples through the pacts and alliances made among them.

The word *mitrá* can refer not only to the god Mitra but also to a *mitrá*, an ally, and the poet makes use of this ambiguity in verse 4. The god Mitra wins a dwelling free from threat or constraint through the power of divinely sanctioned alliances, and therefore one who is a true ally, who embodies the principles of the god of alliances, also wins such a dwelling. The connection between the god Mitra and the human ally is further suggested by verse 3, in which Mitra and Varuṇa are invoked to give out the prizes of victory, and verse 4, in which the person in a parallel fashion distributes offerings.

1. He who is perceptive has strong resolve. Let him speak among the gods for us—
   he whose songs beautiful Varuṇa or Mitra longs for.
2. Since these two are kings of most glorious luster and farthest fame,
   they are lords of the settlement, who grow through the truth and possess the truth, among every people.
3. Imploring you for help, I address you two ancient ones together:
   "Through your good perception, with your good horses, (race) toward the prizes of victory to give them out."

4. Mitra [/an ally] then wins a broad way for peaceful dwelling, even out of narrow straits,
   since the favor of triumphant Mitra belongs to him who distributes offerings.
5. Blameless, helped by you, we would be completely within the most extensive help
   of Mitra, whose complement is Varuṇa.
6. The two of you, o Mitra, arrange this people and lead them together.
   Do not overlook the generous one nor us seers. Give us wide space under your protection.

V.66 (420) Mitra and Varuṇa

Rātahavya Ātreya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn shows similarities to the preceding hymn, attributed to the same poet. Note especially the first line, whose beginning, *ā́ cikitāna sukrátū* "Here are the two of strong resolve, o perceptive mortal," uses similar lexical elements as 65.1a *yáś cikéta sá sukrátuḥ* "He who is perceptive has strong resolve." In V.65 the poet singles out Mitra, especially in the last three verses of the hymn. Here the poet addresses Varuṇa alone in the first verse and Mitra alone in the last. This strategy has the effect of defining a beginning and ending to the hymn, but there are also thematic reasons for this distribution of divine names as well. Verse 1 mentions the "truth" (*ṛtá*), which is particularly associated with Varuṇa, who presides over the truth, and in verse 6 the poet hopes that his people will take their places (*yátemahi*) under the gods' protection. The root √*yat* "arrange," here in the middle voice in the sense of "take one's place," is characteristically associated with Mitra's task of "arranging" peoples according to the alliances among them, as was noted in the introduction to V.65.

Renou characterizes this hymn as a eulogy of poetic power and an *ṛtá*, and he is right that these are central concerns of the poet. The power of the hymn is indirectly suggested in verses 1–2. In verse 1 the hymn is "set in place" (*dadhītá*) in the ritual, and this act finds a social and cosmological echo in the next verse, where the rule of Mitra and Varuṇa "is set in place" (*dhāyi*) in the way that the sun is set in place. That is to say, in terms of the verse sequence of the poem, the hymn appears in the ritual and then the rule of the gods appears. In verses 3–4 there is an extended description of the poet's work that implicitly compares it to a raid. As they often are in the Ṛgveda, the "chariots" sought by the poet (vs. 4) may be hymns or even sacrifices that journey to the gods. In verse 5 the gods perceive the hymn of the poet, brought to them by the "beacon of the peoples." While interpreters have variously identified this beacon, we believe that it is most likely Agni (cf. V.11.2), who transports hymns and offerings to the gods.

One of the poet's strategies that makes this hymn interesting but difficult to interpret is his use of indeterminate ellipsis (cf. vss. 1, 2, 3) and obscure reference (esp. vs. 5). Verses 5–6 are the most intriguing example, because they form the climax of the hymn. In 5ab the poet dramatically declares that he will enunciate the "lofty truth," but as is often the case, this lofty truth that he expresses in 5cd is an abstruse one. By the double reference of *yā́mabhiḥ* to a poet's entreaties and to river courses, the words of the poet are compared to flowing streams. These streams flow over Heaven and Earth, which expand for the poet in response. In this reading of the hemistich, the masculine dual *jrayasānaú* "who extend" would be completed by *dyā́vā* or the like, "Heaven and Earth." This is suggested by the vocative *pṛthivi* in 5a, echoed by *pṛthú* in c, for *dyā́vā* regularly appears alongside the nominative *pṛthivī́*, as in I.159.1, II.12.13, II.41.20, VI.11.1, VII.69.1, and VIII.72.9. But the poet's words carrying their entreaties also flow beyond to Mitra and Varuṇa, who likewise become even greater through them. Verse 6 then is a phalaśruti, a "declaration of benefit," expressing the expectation of the poet and his people that they will live safely under the rule of Mitra and Varuṇa.

1. O perceptive mortal, here are the two gods of strong resolve who care for the stranger.
   It [=the hymn] should be set in place for Varuṇa, whose garment is the truth, for his great pleasure.
2. Because these two together have achieved lordly dominion that is not overturned,
   so then, like the lovely sun, (their dominion) over the sons of Manu has been set in place like their commandments.
3. (We search for) you two in our quest for chariots (and for) a broad pasture-land for them.
   With our praise songs we will boldly conceive the good praise of him by whom the oblation is given,
4. Because then, you undeceivable ones, by the fortresses of your skill
   you perceive our verbal craft through the beacon of the peoples [=Agni], o you of purified skill.
5. O Earth, this is their lofty truth in the seers' quest for fame:
   by (the seers') entreaties they [=poetic streams] flow beyond the two [=Heaven and Earth], who rightly extend widely,
6. So that—o Mitra, o you two quick-eyed ones—we and our patrons would take our places within your very extensive, much-protecting sovereignty.

V.67 (421) Mitra and Varuṇa

Yajata Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn emphasizes the multiplicity of the Ādityas, which the hymn connects with their presence in multiple places and their lordship among different peoples (vss. 2, 4). It invokes the Ādityas in the first verse and then Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman; in verse 2 just Varuṇa and Mitra, and then in verse 3 Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman once again. The climax comes in the last verse, which suggests that all the forms of the Ādityas culminate in Mitra or Varuṇa—or, rather, in the two of them together. We offer this interpretation tentatively since the key lines are 5ab. As the parenthetical insertions in our translation indicate, it is not clear precisely how these lines should be construed.

1. Yes indeed! It is just so, o god: the appointed place is worthy of the sacrifice and lofty, o Ādityas,
   o Varuṇa and Mitra, o Aryaman. You two have achieved the highest lordship.
2. O Varuṇa and Mitra, when you two take your seat upon the golden womb, as maintainers of the separate peoples, offer your favor, o you caring for the stranger.
3. Because all of them—Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman—know all things, they follow their commandments like tracks. They protect the mortal from harm.
4. For they are real, touching the truth and truth-possessing among every people;
   they are those leading well, giving good drops [/gifts], and making a wide space even from narrow straits.
5. Now which of you two, (which) of (all your) forms, o Mitra—or (is it) Varuṇa?—is not praised?
   Thus our thought hastens to you two; from the Atris a thought hastens.

V.68 (422) Mitra and Varuṇa

Yajata Ātreya
5 verses: gāyatrī

The poet is intent on praising the expanse of Mitra and Varuṇa's power: he says they are of "great dominion" (vs. 1) and are "proclaimed among the gods" (vs. 2). Then combining their power among both gods and humans, he calls them masters over "earthly and heavenly" wealth and possessing "dominion among the gods" (vs. 3). The climax and purpose of this praise of their power on earth and in heaven is finally expressed in the last verse: they are lords of rains, which come from heaven to earth.

1. Sing forth to Mitra and to Varuṇa with your inspiration and song.
   O you two of great dominion, lofty is our truth.
2. Sovereign kings, whose womb is covered with ghee, both Mitra and Varuṇa
   are gods proclaimed among the gods.
3. Show us your mastery over great wealth, earthly and heavenly.
   Great is your dominion among the gods.
4. Serving the truth by the truth, they two have attained vigorous skill.
   Undeceiving, the two gods grow strong.
5. Bringing the heavens to rain and the waters to streaming, the two lords of refreshments, bringing gifts,
   have attained their lofty throne.

V.69 (423) Mitra and Varuṇa

Urucakri Ātreya
4 verses: triṣṭubh

In the last half of the hymn the poet connects Mitra and Varuṇa to their mother Aditi, the goddess who embodies guiltlessness. He invokes her for wealth, a continuing lineage, good fortune, and health (vs. 3). It is not clear, however, whether it is she whom the poet invokes in 3d or whether it is the two gods. The object is suppressed perhaps to create intentional ambiguity, since the gift that comes from guiltlessness is also the gift from Mitra and Varuṇa. The connection between Aditi, Mitra, and Varuṇa is confirmed in the last verse, which call them Ādityas, "sons of Aditi."

1. The three realms of light and the three heavens, the three airy spaces do you two uphold, o Varuṇa and Mitra,
   strengthening the emblem of your lordship, protecting your unaging commandment.
2. O Varuṇa and Mitra, your milk-cows are filled with refreshments. Your rivers give honey-rich milk.
   Three brilliant bulls [=fires?] stand far and wide, the semen-givers of the three holy places.
3. In the early morning, at midday, and at the rising of the sun, again and again I call upon the goddess Aditi
   for wealth in its entirety, o Mitra and Varuṇa. I invoke (her) for kith and kin, for luck and life.

4. (You) two heavenly Ādityas, who are the upholders of the earthly space and the realm of light—
   o Mitra and Varuṇa, the immortal gods do not violate your enduring commandments.

V.70 (424) Mitra and Varuṇa

Urucakri Ātreya
4 verses: gāyatrī

The most interesting question about this hymn is why Mitra and Varuṇa are here called Rudras, and the most interesting verse is the mysterious final one. Rudra is a healer but also a terrifying archer, and the purpose of the poet may be to make sure that the vengeance of Mitra and Varuṇa, which is like the fury of Rudra, be turned against his enemies. Mitra and Varuṇa should protect and rescue him and direct their anger toward the Dasyus, not toward him (vs. 3).

This observation may help us understand the last verse, although its meaning remains uncertain. As also in IV.3.13, we read the beginning of pāda a as *mā́ akásya*, rather than *mā́ kásya* with the Padapāṭha and most other interpreters. The fear expressed in ab, then, is that the poet will be destroyed and thereby become a nonentity. This fear is not only for the present, but also for the future. In pāda c the poet asks that after death he not become a nobody, a nonentity, but that in heaven his remains form a new body and that on earth his life continue in his lineage.

1. Since now there is help from you two, even in (its full) quantity and breadth,
   I have won the favor of you two, o Varuṇa and Mitra.
2. We would attain you two together, o you without deception, and your refreshment for our nurture.
   We would be such ones, o you two Rudras.
3. Protect us, Rudras, by your protections, and rescue us, since you are good rescuers.
   We in our own persons would overcome the Dasyus.
4. O you of undeceived will, may we in our own persons not endure (becoming) the specter of a nobody,
   neither in our remains nor in our lineage.

V.71 (425) Mitra and Varuṇa

Bāhuvṛkta Ātreya
3 verses: gāyatrī

This and the following hymn are attributed to the same poet, and indeed have similar purposes and deploy similar techniques. Both hymns are straightforward invitations to Mitra and Varuṇa to come to the rite and to drink the soma. In V.71 the poet emphasizes his invocation to the two gods by repeating their names at the beginning of pāda b of each verse. The repetition is underlined by the fact that the names are followed in each case by just a single word completing the line, a word that has a different grammatical form and syntactic function in each verse.

1. Come here to us with might, o you caring for the stranger, o Varuṇa and Mitra,
   to this cherished rite.
2. Because you are kings of all, being masters, o attentive ones, o Varuṇa and Mitra,
   make our insights swell.
3. Come here toward the pressing of the pious man, o Varuṇa and Mitra,
   to drink of this soma.

V.72 (426) Mitra and Varuṇa

Bāhuvṛkta Ātreya
3 verses: uṣṇih

In this hymn, which continues the themes and techniques of the preceding hymn, the poet repeats a refrain that asks the gods to be present and to receive the soma offerings. In verse 2 of this hymn he does not mention the names of the gods, as he does in the first and third verses, but rather begins pāda a with *vraténa* "by your commandment" and ends pāda b with *yātayájjanā* "who arrange the peoples." The word *vratá* is particularly associated with Varuṇa, both conceptually and etymologically, and √*yat* "arrange" describes the function of Mitra. Instead of pairing the two names, the poet has created a chiasmic pairing of the most characteristic functions of the gods.

1. Like Atri, we pour an offering to Mitra and Varuṇa with our songs.
   – Sit down upon the ritual grass to drink the soma.
2. By your commandment, you are those two who give peaceful dwellings that endure, who arrange the peoples according to your foundation.
   – Sit down upon the ritual grass to drink the soma.
3. Mitra and Varuṇa take pleasure in our sacrifice to their liking.
   – Let them sit down upon the ritual grass to drink the soma.

V.73 (427) Aśvins

Paura Ātreya
10 verses: anuṣṭubh

The central theme of the hymn is the journey of the Aśvins: their journey that encompasses the whole world and their journey to the poet's sacrifice. Geldner

describes this hymn as strophic, consisting of five paired verses; this structure expresses the thematic division of the hymn.

Verses 1–2 describe the Aśvins as moving somewhere, possibly near or possibly far, but in any case the poet invites them to travel here to his sacrifice. Since the poet has begun with a reference to journeys of the Aśvins, it is not surprising that he then turns to a description of their wonderful chariot. According to the interpretation we offer here, one wheel of that chariot is the sacrificial fire (vs. 3). Behind this symbolism is likely the recurrent representation of the sacrifice as a chariot, particularly as the Aśvins' chariot. The other wheel of their chariot is the sun (vs. 4). Running on these two wheels the Aśvins both range over the whole world and are present at the sacrifice.

Verses 5–6 are connected by the theme of heat, and as in the case of the two wheels, one form of heat is cosmic, the other form ritual. In verse 5 Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun, mounts the chariot of the Aśvins, which drives onward ahead of the rising, burning sun. In verse 6 what is called *gharmá* "hot" is either the Pravargya pot, in which the milk for the Aśvins is heated, or the hot milk itself. While verse 5 refers primarily to the sun and verse 6 to the Pravargya rite, there is also a secondary, implied reference to the ritual in verse 5 and to the sun in verse 6. The motif of Sūryā's mounting the Aśvins' chariot is always a courtship or wedding image. Here in verse 5 she may be brought as bride to Soma (cf. X.85), who is, of course, at the center of the rite.

Because the interpretation of 8ab is uncertain, the connection between verses 7–8 is less clear than in the other pairs of verses. In verse 7 the horse thunders as he brings the Aśvins to the rite at the invitation of Atri, who may be not the Atri of legend but his present or future descendant. In verse 8ab the subject is suppressed, and various interpreters have suggested various possibilities: the Aśvins' honeyed whip (Geldner), the hymn (Sāyaṇa, Geldner, cf. VIII.6.43), a cow (Pirart 2001: 243–44, cf. II.16.8). It could even be the "thundering" of the lead horse from the previous verse. We have left the identification unclear, although a reference to the hymn (*dhī́*) in one way or another appears to us likely. The balance between the Aśvins' presence in the cosmos and in the rite is repeated in 8cd, which describes the Aśvins' journey across the seas and the ritual offerings made to them.

The concluding verses then restate the theme of the Aśvins' journey throughout the world and explicitly connect that journey to the ritual, since they compare the hymns that bring the Aśvins to chariots.

1. Whether today you two are far distant, whether close by, o Aśvins,
   or whether—o you who bring many enjoyments many times—
   (you are) in the midspace, come here.
2. Here are these two who appear most often, bringing their many
   wondrous powers.
   With longing for space, I beseech the pair who are not poor. I call upon
   the two most powerful ones to give enjoyment.

3. You maintain at rest your chariot's one wheel [=the sacrificial fire], the
   marvel to be marveled at.
   With the other (wheel) [=the sun?] you fly around the generations of
   the descendants of Nahuṣa and the airy regions by your greatness.
4. And that is accomplished by this (chariot) of yours—(that act) of yours
   which is praised throughout all (generations):
   Born separately, faultless, you two together have come to kinship
   with us.

5. When Sūryā mounts your ever swift-running chariot,
   your ruddy birds keep its [=the sun's] glowing heat from burning.
6. O you men, Atri will be attentive to you two with his good thought and
   attention,
   when he scurries toward your faultless hot(-vessel) with his mouth, o
   Nāsatyas.

7. Your powerful lead horse is moving. Its thundering is heard on its
   journeys,
   o Aśvins, when Atri will turn it here along with your wondrous powers,
   you men.
8. The one that swells with honey follows you two closely, o you
   honey-seeking Rudras.
   When you two will cross beyond the seas, they [=priests] bring cooked
   foods to you.

9. It is really true, o Aśvins: they call you joy itself.
   On their journey these two are the most often summoned on the
   journey; here on their journey they are the most merciful.
10. Let these strengthening formulations for the Aśvins be most
    luck-bringing—
    these that we fashion like chariots. We have spoken lofty reverence.

V.74 (428) Aśvins

Paura Ātreya
10 verses: anuṣṭubh

The hymn opens with the poet wondering where the Aśvins can be (vs. 1). Are they with another people (vs. 2)? Or to whom are they traveling (vs. 3)? The poet wishes them to come to Atri—as in the last hymn, the poet himself (vs. 1)—and to seek out his poetic formulations (vs. 3), not those of others. Several verses later, the poet returns once more to beg the Aśvins' attention (vs. 6), to ask again whose inspired poetry and sacrifices have attracted the Aśvins (vs. 7), and to urge them to come to him (vss. 8–10). The last verse of the hymn echoes the first: verse 1 asks where

the Aśvins are (*kú ṣṭhaḥ*) and whether they will hear the poet (*śravathaḥ*); verse 10 addresses them wherever they are (*kárhi cid*) and anticipates that they will hear him (*śuśrūyā́tam*). Also, in the first verse the poet addresses the Aśvins as *manāvasū* "whose goods are zeal"—that is, as those who bring vigor and passion to sacrificers—and *vṛṣaṇvasū* "whose goods are bull-like," but in the last he speaks not of goods that the Aśvins bring but rather of the "good benefits" (*vásvīḥ . . . bhújaḥ*) the Aśvins will receive, thus reversing the beneficiaries of the goods.

How the internal verses set within this frame are connected to the rest of the hymn is not clear. They tell how the Aśvins rescued Paura from real or metaphorical waters (vs. 4) and Cyavāna from old age and impotence (vs. 5). The story of Paura, whom the Anukramaṇī identifies as the poet of the hymn, is told elliptically. There is a cryptic etymological play on Paura's name in 4ab that suggests that Paura had lost the prosperity that was his by right, or at least by name, but that he was restored to "muchness" by the Aśvins. Unfortunately, the meaning of *paurá* is not secure and therefore neither is this interpretation. This word play on *paurá* is set within a causal *hí*-clause, which normally would be dependent but here apparently is not, and it is then followed by an incomplete dependent clause, which lacks both subject and verb. The abstract dative *gṛbhītátātaye* "for captivity" suggests supplying a verb derived from √*gṛbh* "capture"—"they capture him" or the like—but this interpretation is not at all secure. Is the fragmented syntax an icon of the desperate situation that the Aśvins were able to redress?

1. Where in heaven are you today, o divine Aśvins whose goods are zeal?
   Will you hear this, o you whose goods are bull-like? Atri is trying to win you.
2. Where are these two? Where are they famed—the Nāsatyas, the two gods in heaven?
   Among what people do you take your place? Which of you two is in company with rivers?
3. To whom do you journey? To whom do you come? Toward whom do you harness your chariot?
   In whose formulations do you delight? We wish you to seek (ours).
4. For you two bring to life even Paura, who was swimming in the waters, for the sake of "muchness" (*paurá*), o (you who are) "Muchness" itself,
   when him for captivity, like a lion in the track of deceit . . .
5. You remove the covering like a cloak from Cyavāna, who had become old;
   as a youth—since you two made him so again—he meets the desire of his wife.
6. Because your praise singer is here and we have in our sights (to see) your splendor,
   now hear me and come with help, o you whose goods are prizewinners.
7. Which of the many mortals has won you two today for himself?
   Which inspired poet, o you conveyed by inspiration? Who with his sacrifices, you whose goods are prizewinners?
8. Let your chariot, fastest traveling of chariots, travel here, Aśvins, even across the many (regions), as it seeks us—(it is) the praise song among mortals here.
9. Let our celebration of you be our luck, o honey-seekers.
   Like a pair of falcons fly this way with your birds, o discerning ones.
10. Aśvins, when you should hear this call anywhere,
    good benefits are yours and nourishments nourish you.

V.75 (429) Aśvins

Avasyu Ātreya
9 verses: paṅkti

Two themes dominate this hymn. One, announced at the beginning of the first verse, is the chariot of the Aśvins, which conveys the gods to the sacrificial place. The other is the call of the poet, the theme of the hymn's refrain. The two are intimately connected, since the purpose of the poet's praise is to bring the Aśvins on their chariot to the sacrificial ground. In verse 2 the poet imagines the chariot passing by the hymns of other sacrificers that claim to win the Aśvins and continuing on toward his sacrifice. Because the hymn is leading the Aśvins toward the poet, the voice of the poet rides on the chariot (vs. 4), and the Aśvins' horses are harnessed by the thought of the poet (vs. 6). In 7cd the Aśvins are invoked to travel *tiráś cid* "even across," but it is not clear across what. Geldner (and others, see Pirart 2001: 290–92) suggests a haplology of **aryáḥ* because of the following *aryaṓ*. In this interpretation, the line could mean "even across what belongs to the stranger" or "even across the strangers" or the like. By contrast, we interpret pāda c as a recollection of 2b and therefore supply the phrase "all those 'I shall win'-s." But in either case the Aśvins are again asked not to be seduced by the hymns and sacrifices of others, but to drive by them, heeding the poet's summons to *his* sacrifice.

1. The most loved chariot—a bull and a vehicle for goods—
   does your praise singer, the seer, attend upon with his praise, o Aśvins.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
2. Journey here, Aśvins, beyond and across all those "I shall win"-s.
   o you wondrous ones with golden tracks, with good favor, with the Sindhu as your vehicle.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
3. Bringing treasures to us, Aśvins, come here, both of you,
   o Rudras with golden tracks, whose goods are prizewinners, since you are pleased.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.

4. The musical (voice) of him having good rhythm is set upon your chariot,
   o you whose goods are bull-like,
   and your wild animal of marvelous form [=the sacrificial fire?], your lead horse, creates nourishments.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
5. As vigorous charioteers of attentive mind hearing a summons,
   with your birds (as your team) you run down unduplicitous Cyavāna.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
6. Men, let your horses harnessed by thought, frothing at the mouth,
   let your birds carry you here, together with your good favors, to drink (soma), Aśvins.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
7. Aśvins, come here to this place. Nāsatyas, do not lose the track.
   Even beyond (all those "I shall win"-s) in the search for your compatriot, journey around your course, o undeceivable ones.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
8. In this sacrifice, o undeceivable lords of beauty, you attend to the singer seeking help as he sings—both of you, Aśvins.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
9. Dawn with her glowing herds has appeared. Agni has been installed at the right ritual moment.
   The immortal chariot has been harnessed for you, o wondrous ones whose goods are bull-like.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.

V.76 (430) Aśvins

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: triṣṭubh

In the later ritual the Hotar recites this hymn in the evening as the Adhvaryu and his assistants fan the fire to heat the Pravargya vessel. Verse 1 refers directly to the hot milk oblation offered to the Aśvins in the Pravargya ritual, but, as Houben (2000: 10) observes, the hymn itself indicates the dawn as the time of its recitation. Time is a central theme of the hymn: it is now that the Aśvins are praised (vs. 2), and at present the oblation is extended to the Aśvins (vs. 3). The Aśvins should respond to the praise and the offering because they come at all times, both day and night (vss. 2, 3). Because of the present offering and the ever-presence of the Aśvins, the poet hopes for the Aśvins' "present help" (vs. 5).

Although perhaps not as strongly, the poet puts a similar emphasis on place. The Aśvins should "journey here" (vs. 1, 3), where they are praised (vs. 2), for this is their place, home, house, and dwelling (vs. 4). The result is that wealth and good fortune will be here (vs. 5).

1. Agni shines toward the face of Dawn. The words of inspired poets, traveling to the gods, have arisen.
   Now, o you two charioteers, directed this way, journey here toward this hot-(vessel) swelling (with milk), Aśvins.
2. The best who come, they do not compromise the (offering) prepared (for them). Near and now the Aśvins are praised with songs here
   as the best who come with help by day and at the evening mealtime, in response to trouble and as the best luck for the pious man.
3. And journey here at the ingathering of cattle and at the early morning of the day, at midday and at the rising of the sun, and
   by day and at night with your most luck-bringing help. Does the drink not right now stretch to the Aśvins?
4. For from of old this is your place, your home. This is your house, Aśvins, this your dwelling.
   Journey here to us from lofty heaven and mountain, here from the waters, carrying refreshment and nourishment.
5. – May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy itself and provides good guidance.
   Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all that brings good fortune.

V.77 (431) Aśvins

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the preceding one, this hymn is attributed to Atri, and shares with it the same meter and same final verse. The hymn refers to the Aśvins in the third person in every verse except the central one (3), when the poet turns to the Aśvins and addresses them directly, describing to them the chariot that brings them to his sacrifice. The description of the chariot compares or even identifies this chariot with the sacrifice, since "golden-skinned, honey-colored, ghee-backed, and carrying nourishments" can easily describe the sacrificial fire.

The time of the Aśvins' arrival is the particular concern of the poet. They are the gods *prātaryāvaṇā* "who journey in the early morning," and the poet insists that his hymn and offerings are given at the right time. They are not given too early when it is still dark, for the evening is the wrong time to make the offerings (vs. 2ab)—although whether it is the wrong time in general or the wrong time for the Aśvins in particular is unsure. Likewise, unlike others he does not make his offerings too late, after dawn has already broken (2cd). The "ungenerous vulture" in 1cd is probably a sacrificer who gave too few offerings too late.

1. Sacrifice to the first ones, the two who journey in the early morning.
   They will drink before the ungenerous vulture [=rival sacrificer].
   Since the Aśvins receive the sacrifice in the early morning, the poets
   proclaim them as those who receive the first portion.
2. Sacrifice to them in the early morning, urge on the Aśvins: there is no
   (sacrifice) in the evening, (when it is) displeasing for it to travel to the gods.
   And it is the other one, not us, who sacrifices when dawn has (already)
   come: the earlier the sacrificer, the greater his gain.
3. Golden-skinned, honey-colored, ghee-backed, and carrying
   nourishments, your chariot turns here,
   swift as thought and fleet as the wind, by which you journey beyond all
   difficult ways, o Aśvins.
4. Who has toiled most for the Nāsatyas and will give the most pleasing
   (offering) at the distribution of food,
   he carries his offspring across by his labors. He would ever pass beyond
   those who do not raise their radiance on high.
5. – May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy
   itself and provides good guidance.
   Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all
   that brings good fortune.

V.78 (432) Aśvins

Saptavadhri Ātreya
9 verses: uṣṇih 1–3, triṣṭubh 4, anuṣṭubh 5–9

In the normal arrangement, hymns of more verses precede those of fewer verses, but this hymn of nine verses follows hymns of five, a discrepancy that suggests that this hymn is either a later addition to the collection or a composite, created of originally separate hymns, or both. Formally and thematically it appears to be a composite. It uses three different meters, unevenly divided among its verses. The first three verses, which invite the Aśvins to the soma-pressing, are all in the same meter, begin with an invocation to the Aśvins, and have a common refrain. They thus form a coherent piece. The last three verses, likewise in the same meter, are an incantation to facilitate childbirth at the proper time. Verse 7 apparently addresses the father of the child, verse 8 the child himself, and verse 9 the Aśvins or whatever other powers might help the childbirth. As Pirart (2001: 330–31) notes, this incantation has parallels at Atharvaveda Śaunaka I.11.6 and Vājasaneyisaṃhitā Mādhyaṃdina VIII.28.

The middle three verses provide a transition from the invocation in verses 1–3 to the incantation in verses 7–9. Verse 4, which alone is in triṣṭubh meter, continues to ask the Aśvins to come, but they are to come not to attend the soma rite but to bring help, as they did when they rescued Atri. Atri's situation, stuck within the earth cleft and unable to come out, is compared to that of a woman in need, probably a woman in a difficult pregnancy whose child does not come out. Then verses 5–6 likewise compare the situation of Saptavadhri. He too is stuck and needs to be set free by the Aśvins, and his release is similarly compared to the opening of the womb so that a child may be born. The details of Saptavadhri's difficulty and even Saptavadhri's identity are unclear—he appears to be Atri in X.39.9 but elsewhere he is a different seer. According to Sāyaṇa he was trapped in small wooden casket from which the Aśvins set him free, but this narrative is likely a commentarial invention.

The entrapment of these seers, already compared in the telling to the situation of a woman in labor, not only introduce the incantation in the last verses, but also provide paradigmatic narratives for the birth of the child. As the Aśvins released these seers, so they will release the child from the body of his mother.

1. O Aśvins, come here! O Nāsatyas, do not lose the track!
   – Like wild geese, fly here to the soma-pressings.
2. O Aśvins, like antelopes, like buffaloes searching after pasturage,
   like wild geese, fly here to the soma-pressings.
3. O Aśvins, whose goods are prizewinners, take pleasure in our sacrifice to
   your liking.
   – Like wild geese, fly here to the soma-pressings.

4. As when Atri, sinking down into the earth cleft, called upon you again
   and again, like a young woman in need (at childbirth),
   now by the very speed of a falcon, come here, Aśvins, with your most
   luck-bringing (help).
5. O tree, spread apart, like the womb of a woman about to give birth.
   Hear my call, Aśvins, and free Saptavadhri.
6. For the seer Saptavadhri, who is fearful and in need,
   o Aśvins, you bend the tree together and apart by your cunning.

7. As the wind sways a lotus-pond in every direction,
   so let your unborn child stir. Let him in his tenth month come out.
8. As the wind, as the forest, as the ocean stirs,
   so you in your tenth month—descend together with the afterbirth.
9. Having lain for ten months within his mother, let the boy
   come out, alive and unharmed—alive from his living mother.

V.79 (433) Dawn

Satyaśravas Ātreya
10 verses: paṅkti

A hymn with a remarkably unwavering focus on material gain. Since the priestly gifts (dakṣiṇā) are distributed at the dawn ritual, the goddess Dawn is often associated

with wealth and giving, but here very little attention is given to any other aspect of the goddess. The tone is set by the increasingly monotonous refrain: "o well-born lady, liberal with horses." Several patrons are named in the first verses (1–3), and the poet hopes that patrons in general will be the recipients of Dawn's bounty, in order for them to redistribute it to the poets (4–8).

The usual attention to Dawn's beauty, her first appearance, her journey, her cows, and so forth is entirely missing in this hymn, which does, however, contain one striking image, in verse 9. Why a laggard Dawn would be compared to a thief isn't entirely clear, but it is quite possibly because thieves worked at night.

1. Awaken us today for great wealth, o Dawn, as heaven-bright one,
just as you also awakened us at Satyaśravas Vāyya's
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
2. You who dawned forth at Sunītha Śaucadratha's, o Daughter of Heaven,
dawn forth at the mightier Satyaśravas Vāyya's
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
3. As one bringing goods hither, dawn forth for us today, o Daughter of Heaven—
you who dawned forth at the mightier Satyaśravas Vāyya's
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
4. The (oblation-)conveyors who greet you with praises, far-radiant one—
those very splendid ones (will become) possessed of gifts and lovely presents, through your bounties, o bounteous one
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
5. For whenever these throngs appear to you (fit) for the giving of bounties,
eager, they surround those who give immoderate benefit [=patrons]
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
6. Upon them confer glory in heroes, bounteous Dawn—upon the patrons,
who, bounteous (themselves), have granted us immoderate benefits
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
7. To them bring lofty brilliance and glory, o bounteous Dawn,
to the patrons who apportion to us benefits consisting of horses and cows
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
8. And bring to us refreshments along with cows, o Daughter of Heaven,
simultaneously with the rays of the sun, with his glittering, gleaming beams
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
9. Dawn forth, Daughter of Heaven. Don't keep dragging out your work over a long time,
lest the sun scorch you with his beam as (he might) a swindling thief
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
10. So much you ought to give, o Dawn, or more—
you who, as you dawn, far-radiant one, do not dwindle for the praisers
– o well-born lady, liberal with horses.

V.80 (434) Dawn

Satyaśravas Ātreya
6 verses: triṣṭibh

Although this hymn is attributed to the same poet as V.79 by the Anukramaṇī, it is entirely different in tone. Dawn's association with wealth is mentioned in verse 3, but the focus is first on her journey (vss. 1–3) and then, in the second half of this brief hymn (vss. 4–6), on the beauty of her body as it is slowly revealed in the growing light, in images of delicate sensuality.

Each verse but the first begins with the emphatic pronoun *eṣá* "she," and there is no doubt that "she" is all that matters in the hymn.

1. The lofty one whose course is brilliant, who is truthful through her truth, whose breath is ruddy, who is widely radiant,
goddess Dawn who brings the sun here—in response to her do the inspired poets awaken with their poetic thoughts.
2. She, worthy to be seen, awakening the people, making the paths easy to travel, drives in the vanguard
with a lofty chariot, herself lofty, setting all in motion. Dawn extends her light in the vanguard of the days.
3. She, after hitching up with her ruddy cows, without fail has produced her wealth unremittingly.
Blazing paths for good passage, the goddess, praised by many, bringing all valuables, radiates widely.
4. She, the dappled one, becomes doubly exalted as she reveals her body in the east.
She follows along the path of truth, straight to the goal. Like one who knows the way, she does not confound the directions.
5. She, like a beauty who knows her own body, has stood up erect like a bather for us to see.
Thrusting away hatred and the shades of darkness, Dawn, the Daughter of Heaven, has come here with her light.
6. She, the Daughter of Heaven, facing toward men, lets her breast spill over like a fortunate young wife,
disclosing desirable things to the pious. The young woman has created light once again, as before.

V.81 (435) Savitar

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
5 verses: jagatī

The Anukramaṇī attributes both this and the next hymn, also to Savitar, to Śyāvāśva, the poet of the Marut cycle in this maṇḍala, and indeed the poet names himself at the end of the last verse (5). However, the subject of Savitar does not seem to have inspired him to the same poetic heights as the Maruts did. The hymn depicts Savitar as a power in the cosmos (especially vss. 2–5), but also as a poet and distributor of benefits to mortals (1–2ab).

1. They hitch up their mind and they hitch up their insights—the inspired poets attentive to the poetic inspiration of the lofty inspired poet.
   He distributes the ritual offerings as the only one who knows the patterns. Great is the encircling praise of Savitar.
2. The sage poet fastens all forms upon himself. He has impelled benefit to the two-footed and the four-footed.
   He has looked out across the firmament—Savitar worthy to be chosen. He rules following the lead of Dawn.
3. Whose lead the others have followed: the gods (following) the might of the god with their power;
   who measured out the earthly (spaces)—he, the steed [/Etaśa], (also) measured out the (heavenly) spaces with his greatness: god Savitar.
4. And you travel, Savitar, through the three luminous realms, and you are at home with the rays of the sun.
   And you encircle the night on both sides, and you become Mitra [/an ally], o god, through your supports.
5. And you are master over impulsion, just you alone, and you become Pūṣan through your journeys.
   And you rule over all this world here. Śyāvāśva has achieved his praise for you, Savitar.

V.82 (436) Savitar

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
9 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, arranged in tṛcas

Structuring this hymn is an insistent pun on the name of Savitar ("the Impeller") derived from the root *sū* "impel": there are eight separate verbal and nominal forms of this root in the hymn. Savitar is also identified as the Apportioner (Bhaga), who often elsewhere appears as a separate divinity though regularly associated with Savitar, and what he is urged to impel is, for the most part, a good portion for us.

1. This we choose of Savitar's: the sustenance of the god—
   the Apportioner's best vanquishing power, which best confers wholeness—(that) would we acquire.
2. For of this Savitar here—his own very self-glorious self-sovereignty they do not confound in any way.
3. Because he, Savitar the Apportioner, will impel treasures to the pious, we beg him for the brilliant portion.
4. Today, god Savitar, you have impelled to us a good portion consisting of offspring.
   Impel away the bad dream.
5. All difficulties impel away, god Savitar.
   What is beneficial, that impel here to us.
6. (If we are) without offense to Aditi, at the impulsion of god Savitar might we acquire all things of value.
7. With our hymns we choose today the one with all the gods in his charge, the lord of settlements,
   whose impulsion comes true: Savitar.
8. Who goes in front of both these two day-halves unremittingly and with good intentions: god Savitar.
9. Who makes all these creatures hearken with his signal-call and will impel (them) forth: Savitar.

V.83 (437) Parjanya

Atri Bhauma
10 verses: triṣṭubh 1, 5–8, 10, jagatī 2–4, anuṣṭubh 9

Parjanya ("Thunder") is the subject of only three hymns in the Ṛgveda. This lovely hymn, much translated, is reminiscent of the Marut hymns in this maṇḍala, though not ascribed to the same poet. (The Maruts are addressed here in vs. 6.) Vivid images of the power of the thunderstorm are mingled with expressions of thanks for the fructifying effects of the accompanying rains, depicted as sexual in nature. In the last verse the poet describes all the good Parjanya has done, but gently urges him to desist.

1. Address the powerful one with these hymns. Praise Parjanya. With reverence seek to entice him here.
   The constantly roaring bull of lively drops deposits his semen as embryo in the plants.
2. He smashes apart the trees and also smashes the demons. All creation fears him who has the mighty weapon.
   And (even) the blameless one shrinks from the one of bullish powers, when Parjanya, thundering, smashes those who do ill.

3. Like a charioteer lashing out at his horses with a whip, he reveals his rain-bearing messengers.
   From afar the thunderings of the lion rise up, when Parjanya produces his rain-bearing cloud.
4. The winds blow forth; the lightning bolts fly. The plants shoot up; the sun swells.
   Refreshment arises for all creation, when Parjanya aids the earth with his semen.
5. At whose commandment the earth bobs up and down, at whose commandment the hoofed (livestock) quivers,
   at whose commandment the plants take on all forms—you, Parjanya—extend to us great shelter.
6. Grant us rain from heaven, o Maruts; make the streams of the bullish stallion swell forth.
   (Parjanya,) come nearby with this thundering, pouring down the waters as the lord, our father.
7. Roar! Thunder! Set an embryo! Fly around with your water-bearing chariot.
   Drag the water-skin unleashed, facing downward. Let uplands and lowlands become alike.
8. The great bucket—turn it up, pour it down. Let the brooks, unleashed, flow forward.
   Inundate Heaven and Earth with ghee. Let there be a good watering hole for the prized cows.
9. When, o Parjanya, constantly roaring, thundering you smash those who do ill,
   all of this here, whatever is on the earth, rejoices in response.
10. You have rained rain: (now) hold it back. You have made the wastelands able to be traversed.
    You have begotten the plants for nourishment, and you have found (this?) inspired thought for the creatures.

V.84 (438) Earth

Atri Bhauma
3 verses: anuṣṭubh

This tiny hymn is attributed to the same poet as the preceding hymn to Parjanya and complements that hymn. The poem is a sort of riddle: the first verse establishes that Earth is the addressee, and in the next verse the address to a feminine being (the word "earth" is feminine in gender and conceived of as female) continues. But none of the characteristics mentioned in that verse seem particularly Earth-like. She

is addressed as oscillating and silvery; she is associated with the nights; she "flings" moisture. The riddle is—under what circumstances could Earth be so described? The answer: under the darkness of the monsoon clouds, when thunder causes her to shake (thus "oscillating"; see V.83.5) and she is "silvery" with rain, which she "flings" in the forms of streams and rivulets down her slopes, mentioned in verse 1. This solution was adumbrated by Thieme (1964: 58) and is discussed further in Jamison (2013).

If the audience doesn't solve the riddle in verse 2, verse 3 provides the answer.

1. Yes indeed! (It is) just so: you bear the pressure of the mountains, o Earth,
   as you bring the ground to life with your greatness, o gently sloping great one.
2. Praises sound in response to you, oscillating lady, through the nights,
   as you fling the swelling moisture forward like a (horse) neighing for a prize, silvery one—
3. You who, steadfast yourself, keep fast the trees all across the earth by your strength,
   when the lightning bolts of the dark cloud and the rains from heaven rain for you.

V.85 (439) Varuṇa

Atri Bhauma
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is often admired and translated because of its grand vision of Varuṇa as a creator god (vss. 1–6) and as a god who forgives the faults of human beings (vss. 7–8). But what is the connection between these two sides of Varuṇa? The poet joins the two functions of Varuṇa formally by the repetition of the accented preverb *ví-*, meaning "out," "apart," or the like. In fashioning the world and sustaining life, Varuṇa "split apart" (*ví… jaghā́na*, 1c), "stretched out" (*ví… tatāna*, 2a), "soaks" (*vy ùnatti*, 3d), and "measured out" (*ví mamé*, 5d). All this leads up to the plea that Varuṇa "unbind" (*ví ṣya*, 8c) the wrongs that people commit. With their sense of opening up and freeing, the verbal compounds with *ví-* create not only a verbal connection between Varuṇa's cosmogonic and redemptive acts, but a logical one as well. On the cosmological plane Varuṇa spread out the world beneath the sun (vs. 1cd), stretched out the midspace (vs. 2ab), and lets loose the rain (vss. 3–4) and the rivers (vs. 6). Analogously, on the moral plane he loosens the fetters that people's evildoing would otherwise create (vs. 8). Thus the hymn is dominated by the name of Varuṇa, which occurs in every verse except one (vs. 6) and the preverb *ví-*. Even where these do not appear, the poet echoes *váruṇa* and *ví-* throughout the hymn by repeating words

containing *-v-* and, especially, beginning with *v-*, for example, *váneṣu* and *vā́jam* opening 2a and 2b, *téna víśvasya* and *yávaṃ ná vṛṣṭír ví* at the beginning of 3c and 3d, *váruṇo vāṣṭi* in 4b, *vasata* and *vīrā́ḥ* in 4c and 4d, and so forth.

In all of this, verse 6 is anomalous, since it does not mention Varuṇa by name and does not contain *ví-* or even a word beginning with *v-*. It is generally more difficult to explain why something does not occur than why something does, but the position and content of the verse suggest possible reasons for these omissions. First, the verse may be marked, albeit by absence, because it is the transitional verse from the cosmological themes of the first part of the hymn to the redemptive one of the last two verses. Second, the theme of the verse is the mystery of the god. Its center is the paradox in 6cd that the "sea"—whatever body of water is meant by that—never fills despite the waters flooding into it. The opening line of the verse mentions Varuṇa's *māyā́*, his "cunning," and calls him the *kavítama*, "the foremost sage poet," the one who best knows and best articulates what he knows. The poet may have suppressed overt mention of Varuṇa's name to indicate the impenetrability of his power and mind.

1. Chant forth to the sovereign king a lofty and deep formulation, dear to famed Varuṇa,
   who, like a butcher an animal hide, split apart the earth to form an underlayer for the sun.
2. He stretched out the midspace upon the trees, the prize of victory in the steeds, the milk in the ruddy (cows);
   Varuṇa placed resolve in hearts, fire in waters, the sun in heaven, and soma on the stone.
3. Varuṇa has poured out the cask with its opening below upon the two world-halves and the midspace.
   By this he is king of the whole living world. Like rain the barley, he soaks the land.
4. He soaks the land, the earth, and heaven. When Varuṇa wishes milk to flow, then surely it does:
   the mountains cloak themselves with the rain cloud; showing their might, the heroes [=the Maruts?] let themselves loose.
5. I proclaim this great cunning of the lordly, famed Varuṇa,
   who, standing in the midspace as if with a measuring rod, measured out earth with the sun.
6. And now no one defies this great cunning of the foremost sage poet, the god:
   that the mottled streams, pouring out, do not fill the single sea with water.
7. O Varuṇa, the offense that we have committed against any partner, be he one by alliance or one by custom, or against a brother,
   or against a neighbor—whether native or foreign—o Varuṇa, loosen that.
8. If (we have cheated) as gamblers cheat in a dice game, whether overtly or whether we are unaware,
   unbind all these things (so they will be) like loose things, o god. Then would we be dear to you, Varuṇa.

V.86 (440) Indra and Agni

Atri Bhauma
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except virāṭpūrvā 6

Although Agni and Indra separately receive the largest number of Ṛgvedic hymns of any of the gods, they have little to do with each other conceptually or ritually, and the relatively few hymns they share (eleven in all) tend either to be banal, boiler-plate hymns without much content, or else ones favoring one or the other of the gods. There are elements of both types in this hymn. On the one hand, Indra and Agni are invoked as a pair through much of the hymn with fairly all-purpose phraseology. On the other, the two exploits described (in 1cd and the very difficult 3cd, the middle of the hymn) are Indraic: the first a clear reference to the Vala myth, though with Trita, not Indra, as hero; the second a reference to the Vṛtra myth, with some curious features, especially the unidentified wooden object.

1. Indra and Agni, the mortal whom you both help in the prize-contests,
   that one splits open even the fastnesses to (reach) their brilliant (contents), as Trita (did) the voices (of the cows? of the rivers?).
2. You two who are difficult to surpass in battles, who are worthy of fame at the prize-contests,
   who sur(mount) the five domains—these two, Indra and Agni, we invoke.
3. Vehement is the force of those two bounteous ones, sharp their missile.
   With the wooden (weapon?) in the hands of the Vṛtra-smasher he [=Vṛtra-smashing Indra] goes questing (in his quest) for cattle.
4. In our quest for chariots we call upon you two, Indra and Agni,
   the two lords of powerful generosity, the knowing ones who most long for hymns.
5. The two, growing strong through the days, the two gods undeceptive to the mortal,
   just these two do I set in front, the two gods like portions for a steed, though themselves deserving (portions).
6. Thus to Indra and Agni this forceful oblation [/invocation] has been offered, like ghee purified by stones.
   You two, fix lofty fame fast in the patrons, wealth in the singers—fix refreshment in the singers.

V.87 (441) Maruts

Evayāmarut Ātreya
9 verses: atijagatī

This final hymn of Maṇḍala V is clearly an addition to the original collection, and it is composed in an unusual lyric meter found only in this hymn and a few scattered verses in the rest of the saṃhitā, consisting of five pādas arranged in two half-verses: 12 12 / 12 8 8. (It is convenient here to place the final two pādas on a separate verse line.) The end of the first hemistich of each verse is marked by the unusual formation *evayā́marut,* which serves as an internal refrain, syntactically unconnected to the rest of the verse. This word is aberrantly formed, and our translation reflects what we consider its intent, rather than a literal value. (The Anukramaṇī names Evayāmarut as the poet of this hymn, but the name is obviously secondarily derived from the refrain. We would not be surprised if Śyāvāśva was responsible for this playful Marut hymn.) Indeed, the syntax is lax in a number of verses, which appear to be constructed of metrical phrases with internal syntactic unity but loosely strung together.

In terms of content the most striking feature is the close association between the god Viṣṇu and the Maruts. The Maruts are mentioned with Viṣṇu in other places in the Ṛgveda, but not in such a sustained fashion as here. The thematic connection between them is not entirely clear, but Viṣṇu's famous three strides from earth to heaven, via the midspace, do remind us of the ever-journeying Maruts, who generally inhabit the midspace but are found also both in heaven and on earth.

1. Let your thoughts go forth to mighty, mountain-born Viṣṇu,
   accompanied by the Maruts—Maruts on the march—
   to the troop worshiped at the beginning of the sacrifice, well-spangled,
   powerful, fortunate in their quest, of boisterous commandment, (who
   are) strength (itself).
2. Who—(both) those produced by might and those self(-produced)—
   proclaim (their strength) with their know-how—Maruts on
   the march—
   with regard to your will—its strength, o Maruts, is not to be assailed;
   with regard to their giving, their might—that (strength) is like
   unassailable mountains.
3. Who are heard from lofty heaven through a hymn [/on the mountain],
   beautifully blazing, good in their essence—Maruts on the march—
   in whose seat no meddler holds sway—
   flashing out by themselves like fires—(the chariots?) of the boisterous
   ones (go) forth streaming.
4. The wide-striding one [=Viṣṇu] has stridden forth from the great
   common seat—Maruts on the march.
   When from his own (seat) upon the (mountains') backs he has hitched
   up by himself

   the competitors of extensive might, he goes, growing strong with
   kindness, with the superior men.
5. Vehement like your roar, the driving turbulent forceful bull [=Viṣṇu] sets
   (the earth) atremble—Maruts on the march—
   with whom the victorious self-luminous ones stretch out straight—
   the golden ones possessing taut reins, good weapons, arrows.
6. Your might has no further shore, o you whose strength has grown. Let
   your turbulent strength be of aid—Maruts on the march—
   for, in the sight of all, you are firm-mounted (charioteers) in the
   onslaught.
   Deliver us from insult, (you who are) like blazing fires.
7. Let these Rudras, good battlers, like fires powerfully brilliant, be of aid—
   Maruts on the march.
   Long and broad the earthly seat spreads out,
   when at the drives of them, whose offenses are beyond harm, the troops
   of great (Viṣṇu) ap(proach).
8. Without hatred, come on your way to us here, Maruts. Hear the call of
   the singer—Maruts on the march.
   O you of equal spirit, along with great Viṣṇu,
   like charioteers with wondrous skill, keep hatreds far away in the
   distance.
9. Come to our sacrifice, you worthy of the sacrifice, with its good labor.
   Hear the call in undemonic (spirit)—Maruts on the march.
   Like the most ancient mountains in distant heaven,
   you, o discerning ones, should be difficult to restrain at an insult to this
   one [=singer].

VI

Maṇḍala VI

The VIth Maṇḍala, attributed to the Bharadvāja clan, contains seventy-five hymns. The Anukramaṇī identifies the majority of the hymns as products of the eponymous clan poet himself, Bharadvāja, whose patronymic is Bārhaspatya. These include all of the Agni series (1–16), much of the Indra series (17–30 and 37–43), the Pūṣan series (53–60), and the miscellaneous hymns to various divinities toward the end of the maṇḍala (61–74). The composite hymns coming at the end of the Indra series (44–46, also 48) are ascribed to a different Bārhaspatya poet, Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya, but since Śaṃyu is a speaking name ("seeking luck," reinterpreted from the archaic compound *śaṃyóḥ* "luck and lifetime"), this name may well be a nickname of Bharadvāja. The remaining hymns are attributed to several different descendants of Bharadvāja, all bearing the patronymic Bhāradvāja; these include a number of Indra hymns (31–36, 47), the All God series (49–52), and the final hymn of the maṇḍala, the famous weapon hymn (75).

Although the Indra hymns outnumber the Agni hymns, the Indra hymns are, for the most part, not terribly notable, though deftly executed. By contrast, the Agni hymns specialize in imaginative descriptions of physical fire, and VI.9, a hymn ostensibly dedicated to Agni Vaiśvānara, contains one of the most striking meditations on the acquisition and employment of poetic craft in the Ṛgveda. The hymn VI.28, interrupting the Indra cycle, contains a charming blessing of the cows, and the "clan" hymn, VI.48, repays the attention its difficulties demand. This hymn contains, inter alia, a remarkable, if cryptic, address to the god Pūṣan, and Pūṣan is an especial preoccupation of the Bharadvāja poets, with VI.53–60 containing the only sustained cycle of hymns in the Ṛgveda addressed to this minor deity. Other gods, well represented in other maṇḍalas, receive relatively short shrift: there is only a single hymn to the Maruts (66), two to Uṣas (64–65), and so on.

VI.1 (442) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

A rather stately hymn, appropriate for the first in the Agni sequence in Maṇḍala VI. It concerns only the ritual fire, with almost no mention of its physical substance, and unlike the typical dawn kindling sequence, the hymn depicts the arrival and installation of Agni as Hotar and, especially, the ritual fire as joint possession and responsibility of the whole Ārya community, as Proferes (2007: 33) points out. As the first hymn in the maṇḍala, it thus establishes an image of a settled and well-ordered society unified in its devotion to the gods to which the rest of the maṇḍala will be dedicated.

The arrival and installation occupy verses 1–3; verses 4–8 show Agni's reach through the community, from the individual house, to the clan and settlements, and indeed to all who claim Manu (the first sacrificer) as ancestor. Verses 9–10 detail the homage and service Agni deserves, and the remaining verses (11–13) the favors we ask in return.

1. You, o Agni, as first minder of this insightful thought here, became the Hotar, o wondrous one.
   You, o bull, made (the thought) into power difficult to surpass, to overpower all (other) power.
2. Then you sat down as Hotar, superior sacrificer, prospering in the footprint of refreshment, to be reverently invoked.
   You are the first that men have followed when they seek the gods, distinguishing themselves greatly for wealth.
3. The wakeful ones have followed (you) when you come with many goods as if with a troop, (and they follow) the wealth nearby you—
   gleaming Agni, lovely to see, lofty, who receives the omentum (of the sacrificial beast as offering), shining through all the days.
4. Pursuing the track of the god with homage, seeking fame, they will attain fame indestructible;
   even the names they have assumed are worthy of worship. They take pleasure in your auspicious manifestation.
5. You do the settlements strengthen on earth; you (do) both of the "riches of the peoples" [=patrons and singers?] (strengthen).
   You, o surpassing one—become a rescuer worthy of note, a father, a mother forever for the sons of Manu.
6. Dear Agni is to be served among the clans. As Hotar he has sat down, the gladdening superior sacrificer.
   You, shining in our house, do we reverently approach, on bended knee, with homage.
7. You do we of good insight implore when you are new, Agni, seeking your benevolence, seeking the gods—
   you led the clans, while shining through the lofty luminous realm of heaven, o Agni.
8. (You do we implore), the sage poet, the clanlord of each and every clan, the lavishly overflowing bull of the settled domains,
   impelling the forward progress (of the sacrifice), prospering, pure—Agni who deserves the sacrifice, who rules over riches.

9. O Agni, that mortal has sacrificed and ritually labored who after kindling you has achieved your oblation-giving,
who knows his way around the offering with its acts of homage. Just he will acquire all things of value, when aided by you.
10. To you right here, the great one, great honor would we do, with acts of homage, o Agni, with kindling wood, and with oblations,
with the altar, o son of strength, with hymns, with solemn words. May we take our place in your auspicious benevolence.
11. You who stretch through the two world-halves with your light and who through (words of) fame deserve to be famed as surpassing,
with lofty substantial prizes for us, with rich ones, Agni, radiate out more widely.
12. O good one, manfully establish for us forever and for our progeny and posterity abundance of livestock.
Let there be for us many lofty refreshments that keep evil at a distance and auspicious things bringing good fame.
13. Many goods many-fold in their goodness might I attain of you through seeking you, o King Agni.
For many are the goods in you, o Agni of many favors, for the one who does (you) honor, since you are king.

VI.2 (443) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: anuṣṭubh, except śakvarī 11

In its first half (vss. 1–5) this hymn echoes the themes of VI.1: Agni as the joint concern of all the separate units of Ārya society (and indeed of the gods as well) and the success that attends the man who fulfills his ritual responsibilities to Agni. The hymn ends the same way (vss. 10–11), with special mention of Agni's position in the individual house as well as his role as clanlord. The similarity between beginning and ending is marked by a signal of ring composition: the god Mitra compared to Agni in both the first and last verses. Agni is often compared with or identified with Mitra ("Ally, Alliance") because of his position on earth as guest and helper of men, though himself a god, and because, as god, he mediates the sacrificial alliance between gods and men.

By contrast, the verses in between (6–9) offer a sequence of increasingly dense and complex images of fire, starting with a simple one of whirling smoke and sun-like brightness (vs. 6), but the comparisons in verses 7cd–8 rely on multiple puns and terse and elliptical phraseology. This middle section sets the stage for the rest of the Agni cycle with its focus on the physical aspects of fire.

1. You, o Agni, like Mitra are indeed master of the glory belonging to the settlements.
You prosper fame like prosperity, o good one without boundaries.
2. It is you then that the boundaried domains reverently invoke, with sacrifices and with hymns;
to you drives the prizewinning (horse), avoiding the wolf, crossing (the mid)space, the one common to all the boundaried domains.
3. In concert the men of heaven kindle you as beacon of the sacrifice,
when the human race here, seeking favor, has called upon (you) in the ceremony.
4. The mortal who will bring (the sacrifice) to fulfillment with his insight and will perform ritual labor for you of good gifts,
with the help of lofty heaven he crosses hatreds like narrow straits.
5. The mortal who after kindling (you) will achieve the offering to you and the whetting of you,
he prospers his dwelling place, (so that it has many) branches and hundred(-year) lifespans, o Agni.
6. Your smoke, when it is in heaven, is turbulent in motion, stretched out (there) gleaming,
for you shine with your body, o pure one, like the sun with its brilliance.
7. For now you are to be reverently invoked among the clans, as our dear guest,
to be protected like a son who brings delight to the home, (but also) to be enflamed like a battle-lusty (warrior) in a stronghold.
8. For according to your purpose you are anointed in the wood(en cup) (like soma) [/in your home =hearth] [/driven into the wood(en cup)] like a prize-seeker who gets results.
(You are) encompassing like a household (that encompasses all its members) through your independent power; (you are) made to go in circles like a young steed (being trained).
9. You (eat) just these unstirrable things, Agni, like livestock in a pasture.
(This is your) principle: that your dexterous (flames?) hew the woods, o unaging one.
10. Because you pursue (your ritual duties) as Hotar in the house for the clans who perform the ceremonies, o Agni,
make them unified, o clanlord; enjoy (our) oblation, o Aṅgiras.
11. O god Agni with the might of Mitra, to us you call the gods, call the grace of the two world-halves.
Pursue well-being, good dwelling, pursue the men of heaven. May we cross over hatreds, over narrow straits difficult to traverse.
May we cross over; with your help may we cross over.

VI.3 (444) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The first two verses of this hymn promise success to the mortal who behaves properly and performs his sacrificial duties well. With these decorous sentiments out of the way, the poet can indulge himself for the rest of the hymn (vss. 3–8) in a series of compressed and vivid images of fire as a natural substance, involving both sight (esp. vss. 3–5, 8) and sound (esp. vss. 6–7). The almost feverish succession of image upon image and the contorted phraseology are reminiscent of the depictions of natural fire in VI.2.6–9, but allowed even freer rein and more space. The hymn ends abruptly, without the usual prayers for benefits or even a summary verse calling attention to the praise just offered to Agni. It is a wild, exhilarating, and often baffling ride, especially in the original Sanskrit.

1. O Agni, he who protects the truth and is born in truth will dwell in peace; he who seeks you as god will reach broad light,
   that mortal whom you, o god, as Varuṇa in concert with Mitra, protect from narrow straits along with abandonment.
2. He has sacrificed with sacrifices, he has labored with ritual labors; for Agni who brings wishes to success he has performed pious work—
   so the displeasure of eminent ones will never reach that mortal, nor will narrow straits, nor delusion.
3. (You) whose appearance is spotless like that of the sun: when your fearsome insight comes here as you blaze,
   rich spoils (become yours), since (you are) armed. (But) on his own this one here [=you, Agni], born in the wood(s), is sometimes a cozy nest.
4. Sharp is his course, great his form. He will snap with his mouth like a horse being bridled.
   Lolling his tongue out, like an axe (its blade), he makes the wood "run" like runny stuff [=liquefies it] as he burns.
5. He, just like an archer, has aimed (his arrow), about to shoot. He has whetted its point like a blade of copper—
   he, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice), who is like a bird whose swooping is brilliant by night, who sits in the woods [/on wood], whose plumage is (fit for) rapid flight.
6. Like a hoarse-voiced (singer), at the dawning of the ruddy (dawn), he keeps muttering [=crackles] with his flame, he of Mitra's might,
   the ruddy one who (mutters) to them by night, who (mutters) by day to men—the immortal ruddy one who (mutters) by day to men.
7. He whose (roar), like that of heaven, keeps roaring as he does honor, (that) bull keeps roaring in the tree, in the plants—
   he who, like a traveler in the (sun's) heat, going with a swoop, with a flight, has *stretched with his goods to the two world-halves, who (thus) have (in him) a good husband.
8. Or who (flashes) at his feedings (of fuel) and at the associated chants [/with his associated rays], (that one) keeps flashing like lightning with his own tempests.
   Or who fashioned the troop of Maruts like a Ṛbhu [/craftsman], he, turbulent and wild, has flashed.

VI.4 (445) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

A more conventionally structured hymn than the last two with less knotty phraseology. It begins (vs. 1) by asking Agni to sacrifice for us today as always, in his accustomed role (vs. 2). It ends (vss. 7–8) with a statement of our service to Agni and prayers for benefits. The verses in between (3–6) describe fire in its naturalistic aspect, as in the two previous hymns but generally in more straightforward terms (vs. 5 is an exception and has been variously interpreted).

1. Just as you, o Hotar, will (always) sacrifice with sacrifices at Manu's attendance on the gods, o son of strength,
   even so for us today sacrifice in the same way to the same gods—you willing, to them willing, o Agni.
2. Far radiant like a vision at dawn, Agni worthy to be acquired takes delight in our extolling—
   he who through his whole life has been the immortal among the mortals, their guest who awakes at dawn, the Jātavedas.
3. He, whose formless mass [=smoke] they [=mortals] marvel at as the heavens do, he (then) clothes himself in lights, like the brilliant sun.
   He who, unaging and pure, dispels (hatreds), he has pierced the primordial (establishments) even of the Devourer.
4. You, o son (of strength), are eloquent when you sit for your meal. Agni right from birth has made his own course into his food.
   You, o winner of nourishment, establish nourishment for us. Like a king, you have conquered; you dwell peacefully in a place without wolves.
5. He who eats the wild food sharply, like the wind he goes as ruler across the nights.
   May we, who (serve) you, outstrip the hostilities of (ill-)intentions, as a steed does the (other) "flying" (steeds), as he curves around the curves (of a racecourse).

6. Like the sun with its radiant rays, o Agni, you stretch through the two world-halves with your light.
   The bright one, anointed, leads (us) around the dark shades with his flame, like the descendant of Uśij [=fire-priest/poet Kakīṣvant Dairghatamāsa] soaring in flight [=in exhilaration of soma?].
7. Since we have chosen you, most gladdening with (your) ray-flames, with our (chant-)flames, listen hard to us, Agni.
   You, Āyu, like Indra by virtue of your power or your divinity, do the most manly ones fill with benefit.
8. Now for us, Agni, pursue well-being and riches along wolfless paths. Carry us across narrow straits.
   Grant these things to the patrons and favor to the singer. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.5 (446) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

An unremarkable hymn. It begins "I call for you (all)"—the poet announcing that he is performing his ritual task for his priestly colleagues. He continues with praise of Agni and description of his roles, including that of giver of goods (vss. 1–3). The next two verses contrast the enemy of the mortals present and the punishment he should receive from Agni (vs. 4) with the pious server and the rewards he deserves (vs. 5). Two more verses (6–7) urge Agni to perform these tasks.

1. I call for you upon the son of strength, the youth of undeceptive speech, the youngest one, with our thoughts—
   the provident one of many choices who sends all choice treasures, the one without deceit.
2. To you, o Hotar of many faces, the sacrificial ones have set goods in motion at evening and at dawn,
   you, the pure one, in whom (all) auspicious things are encompassed, as the earth (encompasses) all creatures.
3. You sat down among these clans here from olden days; by your will you became charioteer of valuables.
   Therefore you send goods in due order to him who does (you) honor, o observant Jātavedas.
4. Whoever at a distance will assail us, whoever close by will be rapacious, o Agni with Mitra's might,
   with your own unaging bulls [=flames], most scorching one, scorch him with your scorching heat, o you of scorching heat.

5. Whoever with sacrifice and with kindling wood, who with solemn speeches and with chants will ritually serve you, o son of strength,
   he, provident among mortals, o immortal one, shines out with wealth, with brilliance, with fame.
6. Do this straightaway, o Agni, when prompted: thrust away rivals with strength, strong one.
   When you are praised through the days, anointed with words, then take pleasure in the singer. Listen to his thought.
7. May we attain this desire, Agni, through your help. May we attain wealth, o wealthy one, which affords good heroes.
   May we attain the prize when we seek the prize. May we attain your unaging brilliance, o unaging one.

VI.6 (447) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Most of this hymn consists of a vivid depiction of destructive fire raging across the earth, though the first half-verse establishes a ritual context and the last verse (7) begs Agni for wealth. The hymn is full of phonetic and etymological figures, particularly the last, intensely alliterative verse.

1. Forth to the son of strength with newer (speech), with a sacrifice, seeking a way, seeking help,
   he [=the mortal] goes in pursuit—to the heavenly Hotar, wood-hewing, gleaming but with a black course.
2. He is (like) the brightening thunder abiding in the luminous realm, the youngest one with his unaging, ever-roaring (flames),
   the pure one, the latest fire of many, who travels along many broad expanses as he devours.
3. Sped by the wind, your flaming beams, o flaming Agni, spread out wide asunder.
   Powerfully destructive, (like) the heavenly Navagvas, they conquer the woods, breaking them boldly—
4. Your flaming flames, o possessor of flame, which shear the earth—(flames) like unharnessed horses.
   Then your flickering radiates forth widely, marshaling itself on the back of the dappled one [=earth].
5. Then the tongue of the bull keeps flying forth, like a cattle-raider's missile let loose.
   Like the onslaught of a champion is the ardor of Agni. The fearsome one, difficult to obstruct, fragments the woods.

6. With the radiance of the great goad [=sun] you stretch across the earthly expanses boldly.
   Thrust away fears with your strengths; rapaciously grind down the rapacious rivals.
7. O bright one with bright dominion—(that which is) bright, brightest, showing brightly to us, conferring vigor:
   wealth, glittering, lofty, conferring many heroes—o glittering one, with your glittering (flames) bind (that) to the singer.

VI.7 (448) Agni Vaiśvānara

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6–7

The hymn is dedicated to Agni as Vaiśvānara ("belonging to all men"), but the focus is primarily on his relationship with the gods (see, e.g., vss. 1–2, 4), on his cosmic reach and cosmogonic powers (see, e.g., vss. 1, 5–7), in which aspect he is identified with the sun (see esp. vs. 5), and, especially, on his birth: the root *jan* "beget/be born" is found in each of the first five verses. It is only verse 3 that depicts Agni's relationship with mortals.

1. The head of heaven, the spoked wheel of the earth, Agni Vaiśvānara, born in truth,
   sage poet, sovereign king, guest of the peoples—as a drinking cup to their mouth did the gods beget (him).
2. Navel of sacrifices, seat of riches, the great watering trough—toward (him) did they cry out together.
   Vaiśvānara, charioteer of the ceremonies, beacon of the sacrifice—(him) the gods begot.
3. From you is born the inspired poet who wins the prize, o Agni; from you the heroes vanquishing hostility.
   O Vaiśvānara, establish in us goods to be craved, o king.
4. Toward you, o immortal one, while you are being born, do all the gods cry out together as if to their young.
   According to your intentions they went to immortality, o Vaiśvānara, when you came to light in your two parents [=kindling sticks].
5. Vaiśvānara Agni, these great commandments of yours no one dares venture against,
   since, while (just) being born in the lap of your parents, you found the beacon of the days in the (ritual) patterns.
6. By the eye of Vaiśvānara have the backs of heaven been measured out, by the beacon of the immortal one.
   On his head alone are all the creatures; like twigs have his seven outgrowths [?] grown.

7. He, the very resolute one, who measured out the dusky spaces, (measured) out the luminous realms of heaven—the sage poet Vaiśvānara—
   who extends himself around all creatures, he is the undeceivable herdsman, the protector of the immortal.

VI.8 (449) Agni Vaiśvānara

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7

Another Vaiśvānara hymn, and the cosmic aspects of Agni (and his double, the Sun), extensively treated in VI.7, are touched upon (vss. 2–3). Verse 1 strongly establishes a sacrificial context, however, which returns in verse 4, relating the primal establishment of the ritual fire. The remaining verses (5–7) beg him for benefits.

The hymn is also structured by a phonetic figure, the constant repetition of initial *v-* (see, e.g., 2c, 3a, 3c, all beginning with the preverb *vi*), indexing the epithet *vaiśvānara*, a form of which occurs in every verse but 5.

1. Of the fortifying bull, flame-red, I now proclaim the might, proclaim the rites of Jātavedas.
   For Vaiśvānara a newer thought purifies itself, gleaming like soma, (a thought) dear to Agni.
2. (Even?) while being born in the highest distant heaven, Agni, as protector of commandments [=Varuṇa], guarded the commandments.
   He, the very effective one, measured out the midspace; Vaiśvānara touched the vault with his greatness.
3. He propped apart the two world-halves, as unerring envoy [/Mitra]. He made the darkness pregnant with light.
   He rolled out the two Holy Places [=world-halves] like skins. Vaiśvānara assumed all bullish power.
4. In the lap of the waters the buffaloes grasped (him). The clans reverently approached the king worthy of verses.
   The messenger of Vivasvant brought Agni hither—Mātariśvan (brought) Vaiśvānara from afar.
5. In every generation, o Agni, establish for the singers glorious wealth for ritual distribution and a newer (thought).
   As if with a metal wheel-rim, o unaging king, hew down like a tree the one who curses, with your sharpness.
6. Among our benefactors, o Agni, uphold dominion, unbowed and unaging, and an abundance of heroes.
   May we conquer spoils in hundreds and thousands, o Vaiśvānara Agni, with your help.

7. With your undeceivable herdsmen, o object of our quest, protect our patrons, o triply seated one.
And guard the troop of those who have given to us, o Agni Vaiśvānara, and extend (their/our lifetime), when you are praised.

VI.9 (450) Agni Vaiśvānara

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

A powerfully enigmatic hymn, in which the poet reflects on the craft of poetry, worries about his ability to practice it, and, on having received the revelation of the mysteries from the ritual fire, takes heart and assumes his poetic vocation. In this progression the hymn is very reminiscent of IV.5, also a hymn to Agni in his Vaiśvānara aspect and one in which a poet receives his poetic inspiration from Agni.

The first and last (7) verses establish a ritual context: the fire is being kindled in the darkness just before daybreak; its light, which dispels the physical darkness, will be configured as the metaphorical light of inspiration in the rest of the hymn. Verses 2–3 are responsive verses, with verse 2 couched in the 1st-person singular voice of the poet. He confesses his lack of knowledge of poetic craft, metaphorically expressed as weaving. The burden is all the greater in that he feels pressure to surpass his father, whose poetic heir he is. On the basis of the second pāda of this verse, many scholars have interpreted the whole hymn as a depiction of a *brahmodya*, a poetic contest among rival poets, but we see no evidence of a formal contest here, simply a poet struggling to find his place as a poet within the bardic tradition.

The response to this verse in verse 3 provides the answer to the poet's perplexity: he will learn his craft if he rightly perceives the ritual fire (who is not mentioned by name). This verse not only provides the answer, but serves as an example of the poet's growing skill, for the last pāda of the verse can be read with double application, both to the poet and to Agni. On the one hand, the repetition of "higher" and "below" from 2cd suggests that the same father-son pair is referred to as there, and that the poet is asserting that he will indeed obtain the upper hand over his father from the revelation of Agni. On the other, the pāda can be read as a riddling definition of the god Agni himself, who "moves about below" on the human plane, but "sees above the other" (perhaps the sun, as another form of fire), because he goes all the way to heaven bearing men's oblations to the gods. Thus, what we translate as "'(He [=the poet] is) the herdsmen of the immortal'—(the son who, though) he moves about below, sees above the other [=his father]" can also be read as "(He [=Agni] is) the herdsmen of the immortal, who, though he moves about below, sees above the other [=sun?]."

That Agni is the object to be rightly perceived, referred to but not named in verse 3, which will confer poetic prowess, is made very clear in verse 4, though again the name Agni does not appear—only unmistakable descriptions of fire. The immediacy of the revelation is underlined by the repeated near-deictic pronoun "here (is)" (a: *ayám*, b: *idám*, c: *ayám*). This anonymous but unambiguous description of Agni is continued in verse 5, where he is the entire focus also of the gods. Also important in verse 5 is the characterization of Agni as "swiftest mind," for it is the mental energy of Agni that the poet is absorbing.

In verse 6 the 1st-person poet returns, and with clear excitement testifies to the new flights of his poetic perception and imagination, matching the swift-flying mind of Agni in verse 5. The "light deposited in my heart" is clearly the light of Agni's inspiration. He ends the verse with questions about what he will now say and think—no longer out of a feeling of powerlessness (as in vs. 2), but a sense of future possibilities. (This difference is also conveyed by a change in verbal tense/mood: in verse 2 he wonders about his speech in the subjunctive mood; here he uses the future tense, conveying certainty.)

The hymn has a neatly structured omphalos shape. Verses 1 and 7 are the ritual frame; verses 2 and 6 contain the contrasting 1st-person self-descriptions of the poet; verses 3 and 5 provide the inner frame, identifying Agni as the object of perception of both gods and men; while verse 4 is the omphalos, with its insistent, deictic revelation of Agni immediately before the poet's (and our) eyes.

1. The black day and the silvery day roll out through the two dusky realms according to their knowing ways.
Agni Vaiśvānara, (even) while being born, like a king suppressed the dark shades with his light.
2. I do not know the thread, nor know how to weave, nor (know) what the wanderers [=fingers? threads? shuttles?] weave at their meeting.
Whose son will be able to speak what is to be said here, as someone higher than his father, (who is) below?
3. Just he (knows) the thread; he knows how to weave; he will be able to speak what is to be said in proper order—
(the one) who will rightly perceive him [=Agni]: "(He [=the poet] is) the herdsmen of the immortal"—(the son who, though) he moves about below, sees above the other [=his father].
4. Here is the foremost Hotar: look at him. Here is the light, immortal among mortals.
Here was he born, set steadfast down here, immortal, becoming strong through his own body.
5. The steadfast light, set down to be seen—the mind swiftest among (all) those that fly—
all the gods, of one mind and one perception, come separately straight to (him) as their single resolve.

6. My two ears fly widely, widely my sight, widely this light that was deposited in my heart.
   Widely goes my mind, my intentions at a distance. What shall I say, and what now shall I think?
7. All the gods, in fear, offered homage to you, Agni, while you were (still) standing in the darkness.
   Let Vaiśvānara give help to aid us; let the immortal one give help to aid us.

VI.10 (451) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except dvipadā virāj 7

The sentiments in this hymn are familiar ones: Agni as ritual fire being kindled at the sacrifice, blazing brightly, receiving praise, and bestowing blessings on the poet and his patrons. It is characterized, however, by a subtle strain of deliberately misleading expectations (in part necessarily obscured by translation). On several occasions the audience would automatically assign a referent on the basis of formulaics and context only to discover later in the verse that the assumed reference is wrong. In translation this is most easily seen in verse 3, where the first phrase appears to describe Agni, but it turns out to be instead the poet serving Agni. The beginning of verse 2 belongs to a formula found in a number of places in the Ṛgveda that imposes an identification of Agni on the opening demonstrative "that." It is only in the second half of the verse that it becomes clear that the demonstrative instead modifies "praise." The extreme ellipsis of verse 2 contributes to this game of disappointed expectations: two objects in that verse lack overt verbs to govern them.

1. Set in front your gladdening, heavenly Agni, (who receives) well-twisted (hymns), while the sacrifice, the ceremony is proceeding.
   (Set him) in front with solemn words, for he is far-radiant for us. As Jātavedas (he) will perform good ceremonies.
2. That—o heaven-bright Hotar of Manu, o Agni of many faces, on being kindled along with the (other) fires—
   (that) praise (take to yourself) which (I chant) to him forcefully like Mamatā [/in my me-ness]. My thoughts purify themselves like gleaming ghee.
3. That one is swollen with praise among mortals who as inspired poet performs ritual service for Agni with solemn words.
   With brilliant help the one of brilliant flame sets him [=the poet] to the winning of a stable full of cows.
4. He who, (even) while being born, has filled the two wide (world-halves) with his light, visible from afar—(though) his course is black—

   so even across the dense darkness of the night the pure one is visible with his flame.
5. Now, Agni, with your help that brings many prizes, establish brilliant wealth for us and for our benefactors—
   those who, by their generosity and fame, surpass the others, and by good heroes en masse dominate the peoples.
6. Eagerly take delight in this sacrifice here, Agni, which the seated one with his oblation offers to you.
   Among the Bharadvājas you have taken to yourself the well-twisted (hymn); aid in the winning of the prize to be secured.
7. Dispel hatreds; increase refreshment. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.11 (452) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verse: triṣṭubh

The insistent emphasis throughout this hymn is on Agni as Hotar priest and sacrificer, who sacrifices both for and to himself.

1. Perform sacrifice yourself as superior sacrificer, o Hotar Agni, when prompted, pressingly as if at the hitching up of the Maruts.
   Here to us you should turn Mitra and Varuṇa, the Nāsatyas, Heaven and Earth to the Hotar-work.
2. You are our most gladdening Hotar, without deceit, god among men through (all) the rites.
   As the conveyor (of oblations) with your mouth, o Agni, with your pure tongue perform sacrifice yourself to your own self.
3. For even the wealthy Holy Place longs for (this) in regard to you, (to put you) forward to sacrifice to the gods, to their races, for the singer,
   when the most inspired of the Aṅgirases, the inspired poet rhythmically speaks his honey, hoarse-voiced in his quest.
4. He has flashed, the very clever, wide-radiant one. O Agni, perform sacrifice yourself to the two world-halves of broad extent—
   (you, Agni,) whom, like Āyu, they anoint with reverence—the five peoples having bestowed oblations (anoint) him who receives the pleasurable offerings.
5. When I twist the ritual grass with reverence beside the fire, the ladle filled with ghee, along with a well-twisted hymn, has (already) been held forth;
   the sitting place (of Agni) has been fastened to the seat of the earth. The sacrifice has been fixed (on him), like (a man's) eye on the sun.

6. Be favorable to us, o Hotar of many faces, along with the gods, on being kindled along with (the other) fires, o Agni.
O son of strength, clothing ourselves in riches as if in a girthband, may we slip beyond difficult straits.

VI.12 (453) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

As often, the attempt to capture in words the actions of natural fire calls out the best in the poet. The hymn has a skeleton of typical ritual description, especially at the beginning, but this seems a simple and inert structure into which to insert a series of increasingly contorted and fanciful images of fire.

1. In the middle of the dwelling, as Hotar, ruler of the ritual grass, (ruler) of the goad, Agni is to sacrifice to the two world-halves.
Here is the truthful son of strength spread from afar like the sun, with his flame.
2. You in whom heaven in its entirety [=all the gods] will now perform sacrifice, as it were—you the very clever, the means of sacrifice, the king—
(you) with your three seats, like the plumage of (a bird) that has traversed (the sky?), are to sacrifice the oblations, the bounties of the sons of Manu.
3. (He) whose (course) is sharpest, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice), the ruler in the wood, like a goad on the (race)course, he has flashed as he grows strong (on the hearths).
The immortal one appears like an undisguised reaper in person, (moving) without obstruction among the plants.
4. By our fortifying (hymns), Agni like (a horse) at running is praised in the household, as Jātavedas.
He whose food is wood, winning like a steed with its determination, like a father he is to be woken dawn after dawn by sacrifices.
5. Then they marvel at his light when, carving (the trees) at will, he travels along the earth.
He who immediately, when unloosened, streams ever faster, like a debtor (turned) thief he has headed straight across the waste places.
6. Do you, o steed, *drive here to us, when you are kindled along with all the (other) fires, o Agni.
You pursue riches; you drive across misfortunes. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.13 (454) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn stays focused on its theme of Agni as the possessor and distributor of treasures and blessings, and of the mortals who receive these goods through service to Agni.

1. From you, well-portioned one, do all good portions spread out, like branches from a tree—
at your attentive hearing—wealth, the victory prize at the overcoming of obstacles, rain from heaven, the streaming of waters, (everything that is) to be reverently invoked.
2. You are our Apportioner, for your treasure here is for our refreshment. Like an encompassing (household), you of wondrous luster hold sway (over treasure),
as Mitra does over lofty truth, o Agni. You, god, are the distributer of an abundance of valuables.
3. That lord of settlements smashes the obstacle with power, o Agni, (that) inspired poet carries the prize away from the niggard,
whom you, o provident one born of truth, incite with wealth, in concert with the Child of the Waters.
4. The mortal who has achieved the "whetting" of you, o son of strength, through hymns and solemn pronouncements, through sacrifices and the altar,
he acquires all wealth, according to his wish, o god Agni. He shows mastery through his goods.
5. These (goods) bringing good fame, consisting of good heroes, establish here for men to thrive, o Agni, son of strength,
since with your power you make an abundance of livestock as vigor (even) for the wolf, for the famished stranger.
6. O Agni, son of strength, eloquent, of extensive power, grant us progeny and posterity and prizewinning (steeds).
With all my hymns may I attain to fulfillment. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.14 (455) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except śakvarī 6

Though it begins with friendship, insight, and refreshment (vs. 1), this is a martial hymn, naming Agni as the priest specific to the Ārya (vs. 2) and asking him to give

heroes and victory to the Ārya in their battles with the non-Ārya and to our particular group of Ārya in internal conflicts (vss. 3–5). The hymn is noteworthy in using the metaphor of riches/wealth for an abundance of good fighting men: the phrase "riches of the stranger" in verse 3 refers, in our opinion, to the manpower of the Ārya, and this metaphor is repeated in verse 5.

1. The mortal who (has placed his) friendship in Agni and has savored insight through his insightful thoughts,
   chewing (it [=insight]) now, he should be the first to choose (it as) refreshment, for help.
2. For just Agni is provident; Agni is the seer, the best ritual adept.
   Agni as Hotar do the clans of Manu reverently invoke at the sacrifices.
3. For, o Agni, they [=the clans of Manu], the "riches of the stranger," contend with each other, every man for himself, for (your) help—
   (that is,) the Āyus—(while at the same time) overcoming the Dasyu (and) seeking to vanquish with their commandments the one who follows no commandment.
4. Agni gives a hero winning the waters, vanquishing with his attack, as lord of settlements,
   whose rivals tremble at the full sight of his vast power, in fear.
5. For Agni, the god, through his know-how delivers from scorn (that) mortal
   whose "wealth" is victorious and unobstructible, unobstructible in the prize-contests.
6. O god Agni with the might of Mitra, to us you call the gods, call the grace of the two world-halves.
   Pursue well-being, good dwelling; pursue the men of heaven. May we cross over hatreds, over narrow straits difficult to traverse.
   May we cross over; with your help may we cross over.

VI.15 (456) Agni

Vītahavya Āṅgirasa or Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
19 verses: jagatī 1–2, śakvarī 3, jagatī 4–5, atiśakvarī 6, jagatī 7–9, triṣṭubh 10–14, śakvarī 15, triṣṭubh 16, anuṣṭubh 17, bṛhati 18, triṣṭubh 19, arranged in tṛcas

With its nineteen verses, this hymn as a unity would clearly be out of place in the arrangement of the maṇḍala, but dissolved into a series of five independent tṛcas, its first fifteen verses fit well. The last four verses (16–19) are considered by Oldenberg (1888: 194) to be a later addition, and their vocabulary shows certain signs of comparative modernity.

The content of these triads is generally unremarkable, concentrating on the installation of the ritual fire, Agni's sacrificial role as envoy between gods and men, and the ritual service performed for him by mortals. To some extent the tṛcas seem to be exercises in variation; for example, the first verses of the first two tṛcas (1, 4) share some key words and phrases and can in part be interpreted by comparison with each other.

1. This guest of yours here, waking at dawn, lord of all clans will I stretch toward with my hymn.
   He, ablaze right from his birth, pursues any (food) whatever from heaven here. For a long time the embryo eats just what is immovable.
2. Whom the Bhṛgus installed like a well-installed envoy, to be reverently invoked at the "tree" [=sacrificial post], with flames erect,
   you, o infallible one, well pleased in Vītahavya, are magnified with eulogies every day.
3. You—become a strengthener of our skill, one who keeps the wolf away, an overcomer of the stranger, distant or close.
   O son of strength, (hold out) riches among mortals, hold out shelter of great extent to Vītahavya, of great extent to Bharadvāja.
4. Your flashing guest with his solar glory, Agni, the Hotar conducting good ceremonies for Manu,
   possessing heaven-ruling speech like an inspired poet, the oblation-conveying spoked wheel (of the sacrifice)—to (this) god I stretch with my well-twisted (hymns).
5. Who with his pure, conspicuous body shines on earth as if with the radiance of Dawn,
   who goes in triumph on his course now like the victor in the battle with Etaśa [=the sun's horse], who is athirst (for oblations?) here, like (a traveler) in the (sun's) heat, the unaging one—
6. To your every fire do friendly service with a kindling stick, to your every dear guest in hymning (them).
   Seek to win the immortal one with your hymns, for the god will win what is choice among the gods; for the god will win friendship for us among the gods.
7. Agni kindled with kindling wood do I hymn with a hymn—the blazing pure one in front, steadfast at the ceremony,
   inspired poet, Hotar of many favors, without deceit—the sage poet we beseech with appeals for grace as Jātavedas.
8. You, Agni, have they established in every generation as immortal messenger, as oblation-conveyor, as protector to be reverently invoked.

Both gods and mortals set down with homage the wakeful one as their far-extending clanlord.

9. Seeking manifestation, o Agni, following the commandments of both (men and gods) you speed between the two airy realms altogether.
Since we choose for ourselves your thought as grace, so become a kindly provider of threefold defense for us.

10. Him, of lovely countenance, of lovely appearance, of lovely outlook, might we, who do not know, serve as the one who knows better.
He will perform sacrifice, knowing all the patterns; Agni will proclaim our oblation among the immortals.
11. Him, o Agni, do you protect and him do you rescue, who has achieved an insightful thought for you, the sage poet, o champion,
or (who has achieved) the "whetting" of the sacrifice, or its (proper) outcome. Just him do you imbue with power and with wealth.
12. You, Agni—protect (us) from the rapacious one, and you, mighty one—(protect) us from reproach.
Let the smoke-enwrapped (oblation) come entirely to you, to the fold (of the gods); let thousandfold desirable wealth (come) entirely.

13. Agni is the Hotar, the houselord; he is the king. He knows all the creatures, as Jātavedas.
He who is of gods and of mortals the best sacrificer, let him, the truthful one, set the sacrifice in motion.
14. O Agni, pure-flamed Hotar of the ceremony, when today you pursue (the oblations) of the clan—for you are the sacrificer—
you will offer true (hymns?) as sacrifice when you have become manifest in your greatness. O youngest one, convey the oblations that are yours today.
15. For you watch over the well-placed pleasurable offerings then. One should set you down, to sacrifice to the two world-halves.
Help us, bounteous one, in the winning of prizes. Agni, may we cross over all (narrow straits) difficult to traverse; may we cross over them—with your help may we cross over.

16. O Agni of the lovely face, with all the gods sit first on the woolly womb,
the ghee-rich one that forms a nest. Lead the sacrifice straight, for the impeller (of the sacrificer), for the sacrificer.
17. This Agni here the ritual adepts churn, as Atharvan (did)—
(Agni) who, (though) he sought a crooked (path), they led here unerring from the dark (places).
18. Be born, to pursue the gods in their entirety, for well-being.

Convey the gods hither, the immortals growing strong through truth. You cause the sacrifice to touch the gods.

19. O Agni, houselord of the people(s), we have made you lofty with kindling wood.
May our household (arrangements) not be "one-horse." With your sharp sharpness hone us thoroughly.

VI.16 (457) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
48 verses: gāyatrī, except vardhamānā 1, 6, anuṣṭubh 27, 47–48, triṣṭubh 46, arranged in tṛcas

This lengthy hymn must, like the last one (VI.15), be dissolved into tṛcas in order to fit the numerical arrangement of the maṇḍala. As Proferes (2007: 9) points out, this is an assemblage of Bharadvāja kindling verses, similar to the collections made by the Vaiśvāmitras (III.27) and the Atris (V.28), likewise placed at or near the end of their Agni cycle. Again, the content stays primarily focused on the ritual aspects of Agni. Personal and family names are found fairly commonly (see especially the second [vss. 4–6, and cf. vs. 19] and fifth [vss. 13–15] tṛcas). There are overt signs of unity within some of the tṛcas: for instance, both the second (vss. 4–6) and the third tṛcas (vss. 7–9) begin each verse with a form of "you"; a variant of this is found in the fifth tṛca (vss. 13–15).

1. You, Agni, were established as Hotar of all sacrifices
by the gods for the human race.
2. With your gladdening tongues sacrifice for us to the great ones in the course of the ceremony.
Convey the gods hither and sacrifice,
3. For you, o ritual adept, know the ways and the paths in their straight course,
o strong-willed god Agni, very effective at the sacrifices.

4. You does Bharata, along with his prizewinners, reverently invoke, now yet again, for blessing.
He has sacrificed to the sacrificial one at the sacrifices.
5. You—(give) these many valuables to Divodāsa the (soma) presser,
to Bharadvāja the pious.
6. You, as immortal messenger—convey the divine race hither,
when you hear the lovely praise of the inspired poet.

7. You, Agni, do the very attentive mortals reverently invoke as god at the sacrifices,
to pursue the gods.

8. Begin the sacrifice: your manifestation and your resolve do those of good drops,
the desirous ones, all take pleasure in.
9. You are the Hotar established by Manu, the conveyor (of oblations) with your mouth, the very wise one.
Agni, sacrifice to the clans of heaven.

10. Agni, being hymned, travel hither to pursue (the oblations), to give the oblations.
Sit down as Hotar on the ritual grass.
11. You, Aṅgiras, with kindling sticks, with ghee do we strengthen.
Blaze aloft, youngest one.
12. You seek to win for us here a broad, praiseworthy,
lofty mass of heroes, god Agni.

13. You, Agni, did Atharvan churn forth from the lotus,
(did) the liturgists (churn) from the head of the whole (world?).
14. You did Dadhyañc, the seer, son of Atharvan, kindle
as obstacle-smasher, stronghold-splitter.
15. You did Vṛṣan Pāthya kindle as best Dasyu-smasher,
winning the stakes in every battle.

16. Come here. I will speak to you, Agni, in this way: "(There are) other hymns,
but with these drops here you will become strong."
17. Wherever your mind is (set), (there) you will set your skill next,
there you will make your seat.
18. Since what is granted to you will not be (just) a speck, you good one, who are on (our) side,
therefore you will win (us) friendship.

19. Agni has come here, the one belonging to the Bharatas, obstacle-smasher, manifest to many,
lord of the settlements of Divodāsa.
20. For he will piously offer wealth beyond all earthly (goods) by his greatness,
winning (though) himself unwon, indestructible.
21. O Agni, as of old but anew, with lasting brilliance
you stretch aloft with your radiance.

22. Comrades, boldly chant forth to Agni your praise and sacrifice
and sing to the ritual adept.
23. For he is the one who has sat through the human (life)spans as Hotar with a poet's purpose,
and as the messenger conveying the oblations.

24. To the two kings of blazing commandments [=Mitra and Varuṇa], the Ādityas, the Marutian flock,
o good one, sacrifice here, and to the two world-halves.

25. Good is your manifestation, Agni, for the prospering mortal—
(the manifestation) of (you) the immortal, o child of nourishment.
26. Acccording to your will let the giver be best off, winning you today, acquiring a good legacy.
The mortal has achieved a (hymn) with a good twist.
27. Those aided by you, Agni, (are ones) prospering through their whole lifetime,
overcoming the hostilities of the stranger, vanquishing the hostilities of the stranger.

28. Agni with his sharp flame will run down every rapacious one.
Agni will win us wealth.
29. Wealth in good heroes bring here, o unbounded Jātavedas.
Smash the demonic forces, o you of good resolve.
30. You—protect us from narrow straits, o Jātavedas, from the one who bears malice.
Guard us, o poet of the sacred formulation.

31. The mortal of evil ways who will deliver us to the murderous weapon, o Agni,
from him protect us and from narrow straits.
32. You, god—deflect with your tongue that evil-doer,
the mortal who wishes to smash us.
33. To Bharadvāja hold out shelter of great extent,
o overpowering Agni, and goods worthy to be chosen.

34. Agni will keep smashing obstacles, seeking chattels, amid admiration—
kindled, blazing when bepoured (with ghee)—
35. In the womb of his mother, as the father of his father, having flashed forth at the imperishable (syllable?),
sitting on the birthplace of truth—
36. Bring here a sacred formulation bestowing offspring, o unbounded Jātavedas,
o Agni, (a formulation) that will shine in heaven.

37. Toward you of delightful appearance, have we, affording (you) pleasure,
released our songs, o might-made Agni.
38. Toward your shelter we have come, as if into shadow from the (sun's) heat,
o Agni of golden appearance—

39. You who, like a powerful sharpshooter, like a sharp-horned buffalo,
have broken strongholds, o Agni.

40. Whom they carry like a bangle on the hand, like an infant just born,
Agni, who conducts good ceremonies for the clans,
41. (That) god carry forward, to pursue the gods, (him) the best finder
of goods.
Let him sit down on his own birthplace.
42. "Whet" the dear guest, just born on (the old fire) Jātavedas,
the houselord in his comfortable (birth)place.

43. God Agni, yoke (them) then!—those horses of yours that go straight to
their goal,
that convey (the gods) in accord with your fervor.
44. Drive here to us. Convey (the gods) here to the pleasurable offerings, to
pursue (them).
(Convey) the gods here to drink the soma.
45. O Agni belonging to the Bharatas, constantly flashing brilliantly
upward with your inexhaustible (flame),
blaze, radiate widely, unaging one.

46. The mortal who with pursuit would seek friendship with the god, he,
offering oblations at the ceremony, should reverently invoke Agni.
With outstretched hands he should seek to win with homage the Hotar
whose sacrifice comes true in the two world-halves.
47. Here to you, Agni, we bring with a verse an oblation fashioned by
our heart:
let the oxen, bulls, and mated cows be yours.
48. Agni do the gods kindle at the front, as the best obstacle-smasher
by whom goods are brought here and the demonic powers crushed—by
the prizewinner.

VI.17 (458) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except dvipadā 15

This hymn is divided into two roughly equal parts, with the first devoted to the Vala myth (vss. 2–6), the second to the Vṛtra myth (vss. 8–12). The first verse announces these two themes in order, allotting each a half-verse. The two mythic segments are separated by a verse about Indra's general cosmogonic deeds (7); the last three verses (13–15) urge Indra to use the same powers to help the poet and his patrons.

The account of both narratives emphasizes the role of soma in rousing Indra to his great deeds, and the hymn begins with three verses (1–3) with the insistent imperative "drink!" The Vala myth is in fact configured as a model for Indra's behavior in the present with the mythic deeds presented as still to happen: he is enjoined to drill through to the cattle pen (vss. 2, 3) and to disclose the sun (vs. 3). The hymn thus appears to be associated with the activities at dawn. The Vṛtra myth is more consistently presented as a deed in the past (though see vss. 8, 11).

1. Drink the soma! The cattle enclosure that you will drill through to,
mighty Indra, when you are greatly sung—
you bold mace-bearer, who will hew apart Vṛtra and all hostile things
with your powers—
2. Drink it! You who are the victorious possessor of the silvery drink, who
are the belipped, who are the bull of poetic thoughts,
who are the cowpen-splitter, the mace-bearer, who are the mounter of
fallow bays, you, Indra—drill through to the shimmering prizes.
3. Drink it in just this way, as of old. Let it exhilarate you. Hear our sacred
formulation, and grow strong through our songs.
Disclose the sun, swell refreshments, and smash rivals. Indra, drill
through to the cows.
4. The exhilarating drinks here, when drunk, make you grow loftily
brilliant, o autonomous Indra;
the invigorating drinks continually excite (you who are) great, without
deficiency, powerful, distinguished, conquering—
5. Becoming exhilarated on which, you made the sun and dawn to shine, as
you shattered the strongholds.
You shoved the great, immoveable rock that was enclosing the cattle
from its own seat, Indra.
6. Through your will and your wondrous skills you secured the cooked
(milk) in the raw (cows) by your ability.
You opened the doors, opened up the strongholds for the dawn-red ones.
Accompanied by the Aṅgirases, you sent the cows surging up from the
enclosure.
7. You filled the earth broad and wide—great is your wondrous skill.
Towering, you propped up heaven aloft, Indra.
You fixed fast the two world-halves, whose sons are the gods, the two
ancient but youthfully exuberant mothers of truth.
8. Then all the gods set you in front alone, o Indra, as the powerful one to
"carry (the day)."
When the non-god has vaunted himself to the gods, they choose Indra
here at the winning of the sun.

9. Then even Heaven, she [=Earth] likewise also, bent away from your mace, through fear of your own battle fury,
when Indra struck down the vaunting serpent to lie there for a full lifespan.
10. Then Tvaṣṭar turned the mace with its thousand spikes and hundred edges for you who are great, o powerful one,
that eager, devoted (mace) with which you utterly crushed the screaming serpent, you possessor of the silvery drink.
11. (You) whom all the Maruts in concert will strengthen, for you, Indra, he [=Agni] cooks a hundred buffaloes.
Pūṣan, Viṣṇu (and the others) rinse the exhilarating Vṛtra-smashing plant, three lakes (full), for him.
12. You sent surging here the great gush of rivers that had been blocked and surrounded, the wave of waters.
Along their slopes, along their path, Indra, you set the busy (waters) tossing, downward to the sea.
13. Indra having done all these things in just this way, the great, mighty, ageless giver of strength,
possessing good heroes, good weapons, and a good mace—you—might our new sacred formulation turn here for help.
14. Provide our inspired poets with brilliance—for (them to acquire) the prize: fame and refreshment, and wealth, o Indra;
at Bharadvāja's (provide) our patrons with superior men, o Indra. And, as ever, be there for us, Indra, on the decisive day.
15. With this (hymn) might we win the prize established by the gods.
– Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.18 (459) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
15 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn seems to be aiming to deploy as many different words for power, might, strength, and so forth in as many different derivational forms as possible. The sheer power of Indra, thus expressed, overshadows his particular deeds, which are mentioned in a somewhat cursory way: Vala (vs. 5), Vṛtra (vs. 6, also 9 and 14), the destruction of various named monsters (vs. 8). The poet is also fond of figures involving a positive and a twist on its negation: "vanquishing but unvanquished" (vs. 1), and so forth.

This focus on Indra's power betrays some nervous worry about the existence of that power, expressed especially in the rhetorical question and answer in verses 3–4. A number of hymns in the Ṛgveda raise the question of whether Indra himself exists; here the existential anxiety has been displaced to an abstract entity, his might, but the poet asserts its existence so often and so unequivocally that his audience can scarcely doubt it. Needless to say, the recital of Indra's strength is not disinterested: the poet calls for Indra to use his powers in defense of the poet's people and, in the last verse (15), to perform the deed that *exists* for him to do (a nice return to the existential theme), in order to merit another poem from the poet.

1. Praise him whose might is overpowering, the vanquishing but unvanquished, much-summoned Indra.
Mighty, conquering but unconquered, the bull of the settled domains—strengthen him with these songs.
2. He—the fighting warrior, creator of tumult, combat-hardened, the powerfully destructive, bellowing partaker of the silvery drink,
with high-mounting dust—alone became the victorious rouser of the communities of the sons of Manu.
3. It was just you who tamed the Dasyus, and who alone vanquished (their) communities for the Ārya.
Does that heroic power now exist for you, Indra, or does it not? You will announce that at the proper season.
4. It certainly does exist for you!—so I think: strength, o strongest one, (has come) to you, who were powerfully born, the surpassing surpasser—
mighty (strength) has come to the mighty one, more powerful (strength) to the powerful one who, himself not feeble, furthers the feeble.
5. "Let our age-old partnership with you (all) (still) exist," with the Aṅgirases speaking in just this way—along with them
you smashed the prospering Vala cave, o wondrous shaker of the unshakable, and you opened its strongholds and its doors, all of them.
6. He is to be summoned with insightful thoughts—the mighty one who performs the master's part in the great overcoming of Vṛtra,
in the winning of progeny, in (the winning of) posterity. As the mace-bearer he became worth tussling for in battles.
7. Through his greatness and his immortal name he has extended himself over the races of the sons of Manu.
He is at home with brilliance and with power and wealth, and he, the best of men, with heroism—
8. He, the man who is not to be confused and is not wrong, bearing a name that is good to think upon. Cumuri and Dhuni
did Indra wring out, and Pipru, Śambara, and Śuṣṇa—to shake their strongholds and for (them) to lie there even now.
9. With your helpful energy, (ever) more to be admired, up and mount your chariot, Indra, for the Vṛtra-smashing.
Place your mace in your hand on the right side. Stimulate your magical powers, o you who give much.

10. As fire does dry wood, like a terrifying missile burn down the demon with your lance, o Indra.
He who shattered the obstacles to progress with a (lance) both deep and high, he smoked them out and subjugated them.
11. Along a thousand paths affording powerful prizes, o powerfully brilliant Indra, drive here in our direction with wealth,
o much summoned son of strength, whom a godless man never has the power to repel.
12. The greatness of the powerfully brilliant, stalwart, ardent one has overflowed from heaven and earth.
There exists no rival for him, nor counterpart, no opponent for the strong one with many magical powers.
13. This deed done by you stands out today—that for his sake [=Tūrvayāṇa's?] (you ground down) Kutsa, Āyu, and Atithigva;
many thousands did you grind down to earth. You led Tūrvayāṇa up boldly.
14. Then, o god, all the gods cheer you on for the serpent-smashing, (you) the best poet of poets,
when you will create wide space for oppressed heaven, for its people and for yourself as you are being sung.
15. Heaven and Earth and the immortal gods give way to your might, Indra.
Do, o doer, what undone (deed) exists for you (to do). Generate a newer hymn for yourself along with sacrifices.

VI.19 (460) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous hymn, this one exults in the mighty powers of Indra and in the rich lexicon that describes them, although it is perhaps somewhat less insistent (but see vs. 6ab). Also as in VI.18 the poet exhorts Indra to put his powers to good use for the men associated with the poet. The three middle verses (6–8) all contain the phrase "bring here to us," each with a different abstract power as object, and the remaining verses continue these requests for aid and support, especially in defeating enemies and rivals.

1. Great is Indra—manful, filling the domains and doubly lofty, undiminishing in his powers.
Inclined toward us, he has been strengthened for his heroic deed. Wide and broad, he was well made by his makers.

2. The Holy Place positioned just Indra for winning, him lofty and towering, unaging and youthful,
swollen with invincible strength, who in just a single day grew strong and not by halves.
3. Broad are your forearms, ample your fists. Mete out full measures of fame in our direction.
Like a herdsman to his flocks of livestock, as household master, o Indra, turn here to us in the contest.
4. Striving for the prizes of victory here and now, we would summon him for you, the elusive Indra along with his able (men);
(might we be) irreproachable, blameless, and invulnerable, just as the ancient singers were.
5. Of steadfast commandment, giving spoils, strengthened by soma (is he), for he is the possessor of much livestock, of goods worth winning.
The paths of wealth have joined in him, like the rivers uniting in the sea.
6. Bring here to us, o overpowering champion, the strongest strength, the mightiest mighty might.
All things brilliant and bullish that belong to the sons of Manu—give them to us, o master of the fallow bays, to exhilarate us.
7. Your exhilaration, conquering in battle, never shirking—bring us that, swollen with strength, o Indra,
through which we could be considered victors in the winning of progeny and posterity, aided by you.
8. Bring here to us, Indra, the bullish unbridled force that gains the stakes, swollen with strength, of good skill,
through which we will vanquish our rivals in battles, both kin and non-kin, with your help.
9. Let your unbridled force, a bull, come here from behind, here from above and below, here from in front.
Let it come altogether toward us from all sides. Indra, grant to us sun-like brilliance.
10. Manfully, with your most manly help, Indra, we would win what is worth winning through your attentions.
Because you are master of both kinds of good, o king, grant a great, substantial, lofty treasure.
11. Him, accompanied by the Maruts, the bull grown strong, not stingy, the heavenly commander—Indra—
the all-conquering, mighty giver of strength—him we would invoke here for present help.
12. The person who thinks himself to be ever so great, o mace-bearer—make him subject to these superior men, among whom am I—
for therefore do we summon you at the contest of champions when the earth, lineage, cows, and waters (are at stake).

13. By these partnerships with you, o much invoked one, might we be higher than each and every rival.
Smashing both kinds of obstacles, o champion, we would be exultant through lofty wealth, when helped by you.

VI.20 (461) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
13 verses: triṣṭubh, except virāj 7

Unlike the usual model, this hymn *begins* with the prayer for gifts from the god (vs. 1). But most of the rest of the hymn is devoted to a verse-by-verse listing of Indra's great deeds, not only the standard Vṛtra (vs. 2) and Vala (vss. 3–4) tales, but also the defeat of a series of named enemies on behalf of named mortal clients. Some of these stories are familiar (the Śuṣṇa/Kutsa story, vss. 4–5, and the stealing of Namuci's head, vs. 6), and some are mentioned much more rarely (e.g., Vetasu and Tuji, vs. 8), with unclear details. Many of these same stories are also treated in VI.26.

1. O Indra, wealth that in its vast power surmounts (the wealth) of the stranger, (namely) the peoples in battles, as heaven does the earth,
that brings thousands as plunder, wins fertile fields, and overcomes obstacles—give that (wealth) to us, o son of strength.
2. All lordly power, like (that) of heaven, was entirely ceded to you by the gods, o Indra,
when you, accompanied by Viṣṇu, smashed the serpent Vṛtra, who had obstructed the waters, you possessor of the silvery drink.
3. Overpowering, mightier and stronger than the strong, he for whom the sacred formulation is created, whose greatness increased—Indra
became king of the somian honey when he aided the splitting of all the strongholds.
4. The Paṇis were felled here by hundreds (of deadly weapons), o Indra, for the sake of the ten-armed poet at the winning of the (sun's) rays;
by the deadly weapons the magic powers of the voracious Śuṣṇa (were felled). Nothing at all had he left over from the meal.
5. A whole lifetime of great deception was set aside when Śuṣṇa was felled at the flying of the mace.
Sharing the same chariot, Indra made a wide way for Kutsa, the sharer of his chariot, at the winning of the sun.
6. Like the falcon stealing the exhilarating plant for him, he, stealing the head of the Dāsa Namuci,
helped Namī Sāpya as he slept. He imbued (him) with wealth, with refreshment, and with well-being.

7. You split open the fortified strongholds of Pipru, who had the tricks of a snake, o mace-bearer, as if with swelling strength.
O generous giver, you gave that legacy not to be spurned as a gift to the pious Ṛjiśvan.
8. Indra showed the favor of his dominance to Vetasu of the ten tricks and ten arms and to the thrusting (Tuji), (saying,)
"Tugra as perpetual vassal for brilliant (Vetasu) shall I dispatch, like (calves) to their mother, to go (to him)."
9. Unopposable, he will vanquish the contenders, bearing his Vṛtra-smashing mace in his fist.
He mounts his two fallow bays, like an archer upon his chariot seat; those yoked by speech convey lofty Indra.
10. Might we win anew through your help, Indra. The Pūrus start up the praise with this (hymn) along with sacrifices.
When he split the seven autumnal strongholds, their shelter, he smote the Dāsa (clans), doing his best for Purukutsa.
11. You, Indra, became the first strengthener. Making wide space for Uśanā Kāvya,
(to him as?) grandfather you handed over Navavāstu, who was to be delivered up, as his own grandson.
12. You, the tumultuous one, Indra, set the tumultuous waters in motion, flowing like streams.
When you will cross the sea, o hero, make Turvaśa and Yadu cross to well-being.
13. Everything in the contest is yours, Indra. Dhuni and Cumuri sleep, whom you put to sleep.
Just he will shine: Dabhīti who presses for you with the soma juices, who brings the firewood and the cooked food, along with the chants.

VI.21 (462) Indra (1–8, 10, 12), All Gods (9, 11)

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The first pāda of this hymn introduces one of its major concerns: the relationship between the current poet and the generations of previous poets to whose lineage he belongs and the question of whether Indra will pay the same attention to the current poet as he did to the older ones (see also vss. 4–6, 8, 10). This theme is connected to the common worry about whether Indra himself exists and, if so, where—subtly articulated in verses 2 and 4, and triumphantly refuted in the last pāda of verse 10. The themes are connected by the anxiety about Indra's epiphany (see esp. vs. 4). Since the goal of the soma sacrifice is to produce Indra's epiphany, that is, his appearance at *our* ritual ground, then his absence may result either from

his favoring another group of sacrificers and poets or from the fact that he doesn't exist at all!

1. These insights of this latest of many bards, (insights) deserving to invoke, newly invoke
you who deserve invoking, o hero, the unaging chariot-mounter.
Extensive wealth is sped by their eloquence.
2. I will praise him who is known as "Indra," whose vehicle is songs, who is strengthened by sacrifice along with songs,
him of many wiles, whose greatness projects beyond heaven and earth in their greatness.
3. Just he made the patternless darkness in its extension to be patterned by the sun.
When do mortals, seeking gain, not violate the ordinances that belong to you, the immortal, o autonomous one?
4. He who did these things, where then is he—this "Indra"? Upon what people does he attend? Among which clans?
What sacrifice is weal for your thought, your wish? What chant, Indra? Which one is your Hotar?
5. For up to now they have been ever toiling for you, o doer of many (deeds)—those who were born long ago, your ancient comrades,
those in between, and the current ones. Much-invoked one, take cognizance of the one who is closest.
6. The closer ones, asking about him, have guided themselves following your distant, ancient (acts) worthy of fame, Indra.
As far as we know it, that far we chant to you as the great one, you hero with the sacred formulation as your vehicle.
7. The face of the demon has spread out against you, who were born great. Stand up to it well!
With your ancient, conjoined comrade, your mace, o bold one, thrust these away.
8. Listen, Indra, to the current (bard) creating sacred formulations, you hero who give succor to bards—
for you, as the friend of our ancestors in olden days, have always been easy to invoke in the quest.
9. Bring forward for help Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra, and the Maruts, to help us today,
forward Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Agni and Plenty, Savitar, the plants, and the mountains.
10. These singers here with their chants chant to you, o you of many talents, receiving the first of the sacrifice.
Listen to the call of him who calls you here as you are called. Immortal one, there exists no one like you, other than you.
11. Now drive here, right up to my speech, since you know, o son of strength, together with all those worthy of the sacrifice,
who had Agni as their tongue and served the truth, who put Manu very close to Dasa.
12. Become a leader for us on easy roads and on difficult ones, since you are known as a path-maker.
The broad, unflagging (horses), the best conveyors—with them convey the prize to us, o Indra.

VI.22 (463) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous hymn, this one compares the current poet to previous generations of poets (see vss. 2, 4, 7) and asks Indra directly what in the sacrifice might please him (vs. 4 [cf. VI.21.4]). In fact, the same phrase is used in both hymns to introduce other questions: VI.21.6 *tám pṛchántaḥ* "(the singers) asking about him" and VI.22.5 *tám pṛchántī* "(the song) asking about him." In each case the subject (singers or song) seeks information about ways to make contact and find favor with Indra, though the anxiety seems less in this hymn than in VI.21.

The similarities between VI.21 and 22 extend to their final verses. The exhortation to come here with his teams in VI.22.11 is structurally and semantically, though not lexically, parallel to two halves of the two final verses of VI.21, 11ab and 12cd—an interesting example of how a poet can expand an underlying formulaic sequence by inserting new material.

Otherwise, the hymn alternates verses praising Indra's qualities and deeds in list-like fashion (e.g., vss. 1cd, 2cd) and begging him for wealth and martial help (e.g., vss. 3, 8, 10). Stylistically it is noteworthy that in much of the hymn, particularly at the beginning, the initial word of every half-verse refers to Indra (1a, c; 2a, c; 3a; 5a, c; 7a, c; 11a). In 3c, the first half-verse in the hymn *not* beginning with a word referring to Indra, the poet tricks us by playing on our expectations: the *yáḥ* "who" could easily be Indra, as it was earlier (see 1a, c), but in fact has a different referent. The most complex verse syntactically is verse 5, which is perhaps fitting, as it describes the poet's own song.

1. To him who alone is to be called by the separate peoples, to Indra chant with these hymns,
to the bull with bull-like strength who is master, the real "real thing" with many magic wiles, mighty.
2. To him (chanted) our earlier ancestors, the Navagvas, the seven inspired poets, inciting (him),

to him who catches up to the cheat, the surpassing one who stays on the mountains, whose speech is without deception, to the strongest one, with their thoughts.

3. This Indra do we beseech for his wealth, consisting of many heroes, of superior men, of much livestock,
which is not stunted, not aging, and is filled with sunlight. O master of the fallow bays, bring that here to elate (us).
4. Will you declare this to us—whether ever before singers have obtained your favor, Indra?
What is your portion? What is the vital energy that belongs to a smasher of (rival) lords, you headstrong hammer-head, invoked by many, bringing many goods?
5. The quivering, surging (song), asking about him whose hand holds the mace, who stands upon the chariot—about Indra, whose song it is—
(him who is) powerfully grasping, powerfully ranging, taking on wild frenzy—(the song) seeks her way; she catches up to the bulging one [=Indra].
6. With this magic power (of yours), with the mountain [=mace] that has the speed of thought (you shattered) him who had grown strong through his magic power, you self-powerful one.
You boldly shattered even the immovable, firm fastnesses, o you of good might who confer abundance.
7. (It is) for you [=poets] to tug at him, the strongest one, from every direction with a newer insight, him the ancient one as the ancients did.
Indra, who is without measure, the good conveyor, will convey us across all difficult depths.
8. You set ablaze the earthly and heavenly (realms) and the midspaces against the deceitful people.
Scorch them on every side with your flame, o bull. Enflame the earth and waters against the hater of the sacred formulation.
9. You become the king of the heavenly folk and of the earthly, moving world, o you of glittering face.
Set your mace in your right hand, Indra. Unaging one, you fragment all magic wiles.
10. (Set) here uninterrupted well-being for us, lofty and not negligible, for us to overcome our rivals, Indra,
(well-being) by which you will make the Dāsa and Ārya obstacles easy to thrust away, o mace-bearer, and those from the Nahuṣas.
11. Come here to us with the teams that bring all desirable things, you ritual adept summoned by many, you who receive the first of the sacrifice.
(The teams) that neither a non-god nor a god will hinder, with them drive here swiftly in my direction.

VI.23 (464) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn focuses on Indra's vital connection with soma and on the reciprocal relationship between the soma-presser and Indra, the soma-drinker. This theme is established in the first pāda of the first verse, and every subsequent verse has some reference to soma: all but verse 8 contain a form of the word *sóma* (and vs. 8 does make clear reference to soma-induced exhilaration), and of those, all but verse 7 have "pressed," "pressing," or "presser" as well. The other ritual aspects of the soma sacrifice, especially the poetry and sacred formulations, also receive frequent mention. The reminders to Indra that sacrificial labor should be requited with gifts and help from the god occur throughout the hymn, but are not annoyingly obtrusive.

Stylistically the hymn is noteworthy for its pairs of syntactically linked verses: 1–2 with their "or when" clauses; 3–4 with their run of agent nouns governing accusative objects; 5–6 with a number of repeated formulae.

1. You are intertwined in the pressed soma, Indra, and in the praise song, in the sacred formulation, and in solemn speech as it is recited,
when, bounteous one, you drive with your two yoked fallow bays, bearing your mace in your arms,
2. Or when on the decisive day, Indra, you help the soma-presser in the smiting of obstacles [/Vṛtra] and at the contest of champions,
or when, (yourself) being unafraid, as their skill became fearful, you subdued the vaunting Dasyus, Indra.
3. Let Indra be the drinker of the pressed soma, the mighty one ever leading the singer forward with his help,
the maker of wide space for the hero and the soma-presser, the giver of goods to his praiser, even a feeble one,
4. Going to even such pressings as these with his two fallow bays, bearing his mace, drinking soma, giving cows,
who makes the manly hero possessed of hale heroes, the hearer of the singer's call, for praise songs are his vehicle.
5. It is for him that we toil at what he holds dear—for Indra, who has performed labor for us from of old.
When the soma is pressed, we sing praise; (a priest) recites the solemn words, so that the sacred formulation will be strengthening for Indra.
6. For you have made the sacred formulations strengthening for yourself, to the extent that we have toiled for you, Indra, with our thoughts.
When the soma is pressed, o soma-drinker, might we make (the pressings/the formulations) to be most wealful, enjoyable means of increase (for you) through our sacrifices.

7. As giver, take notice of our offering cake; drink the soma, foamy with cows [=milk], Indra.
   Sit right here on the ritual grass of the sacrificer. Make wide, wide space for him in devoted pursuit of you.
8. Find elation according to your liking, mighty one. Let these sacrifices reach you.
   Let these calls among us (reach) the one called by many. Might this insightful thought guide you here for help, Indra.
9. So that he (will be) together with you at the pressings, comrades, fill him with soma juices, Indra the benefactor.
   Surely he will be there for us for the taking? Indra will not neglect the soma-presser, not neglect to help him.
10. Just in this way, when the soma is pressed, Indra has been praised among the Bharadvājas. Just he has power over the liberal man,
    so that he [=liberal man] will be a patron to the singer. Indra is a giver of wealth that brings all desirable things.

VI.24 (465) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn begins, like the last one, with a strong statement of Indra's relationship with soma, but it then turns to more general praises of the god (vss. 2–8), with some striking similes, metaphors, and etymological figures. The importance of mortal praise and worship for maintaining Indra's powers is not forgotten; see verses 7–8 and especially verse 6, which seems to concern the traffic in praise: inspiration going out from Indra to the poets and then returning to him as praise (for a similar sentiment and phraseology, see VI.34.1). The last two verses (9–10) ask for Indra's gifts and protection.

1. Bullish exuberance, noise, and solemn words are in Indra; he is the drinker of the pressings and in possession of the silvery drink, when the soma juices are in his company.
   He is worthy to be chanted by men with solemn words as the bounteous one, the heaven-ruling king of hymns, whose help is imperishable.
2. The surpassing hero, favorable to men, discriminating, the hearer of the singer's call, whose help is wide-ranging,
   the good one, the Laud of Men, who gives succor to bards, praised as the prizewinner, he gives the prize at the rite of distribution.
3. Like an axle beyond its two wheels, your lofty (greatness), o champion, projects beyond the two worlds in their greatness.

   (Like) the branches of a tree, your forms of help have grown outward, o much-invoked Indra.
4. The abilities that belong to you, the able one, o you of many abilities, are converging like streams of cattle.
   (They are) like cords for calves, Indra, binding without bonds, o you of good bonds [/gifts].
5. One deed today and another tomorrow, one which is not and another which is—Indra makes (them) happen in an instant.
   Mitra and Varuṇa, also Pūṣan, are there for us, but it is he [=Indra] who keeps the will of the stranger contained.
6. Like waters forth from the back of a mountain, they proceeded forth from you along with solemn words and sacrifices, Indra.
   Along with these good praises, seeking the prize they have (also) gone to you, like horses to a contest, o you whose vehicle is songs.
7. Indra, whom the autumns do not age, nor do the months, nor days make lean—
   may his body, even though he is fully grown, grow stronger while it is being celebrated by praises and solemn words.
8. He does not bow to the tough, nor to the stubborn, nor to the vaunting one sped by the Dasyus, when he receives praise.
   Even the towering mountains are flatlands for Indra. Even in the deep there is a ford for him.
9. With a (vessel) that is deep and wide, o bearer of the vessel, hold forth to us refreshments and prizes, you drinker of the pressings,
   and stand erect with your help, allowing no harm, at the early brightening of the night, at its final turn.
10. Accompany our leader to help him at the close encounter, or protect him from harm from here, Indra.
    Protect him from harm at home and in the wilderness. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.25 (466) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The clear purpose of this hymn is to solicit Indra's aid against enemies in battle. The various types of opponents are vividly described, as well as the potential types of hostile encounter: see especially the apparent wrestling match in 4ab. But the poet's expressed confidence in Indra's ability to provide the decisive assistance is also a subtle way of asserting the supremacy of Indra. This second theme can be seen

more clearly by examining the structure of the hymn: verse 5, which concerns the invincibility of Indra, is the exact middle of the hymn and serves as an omphalos; verses 4 and 6 match each other in structure and referents and form a ring around the omphalos, with a further ring provided by repeated phrases in verses 1/2 and 8/9, with Indra's supremacy repeated in verse 8.

1. What is your nearest help, what your farthest, and what your midmost, tempestuous Indra,
   with those (forms of help) help us well at the Vṛtra-smashing and with these prizes, as the great one among us, o mighty one.
2. With these (forms of help), o Indra, (you who) allow no harm—cause the contenders who oppose (us) to falter, cause the battle fury of the foe to falter;
   with them bring down all the attackers (to be) scattered asunder, bring down the Dāsa clans for the Ārya.
3. O Indra, the rapacious ones who, kin or not kin, have hitched themselves up, turning here against us,
   (render) their powers faltering, smash their bull-like (strengths), put them far away.
4. Now a champion may defeat (another) champion with his limbs when the two, their bodies gleaming, will set upon each other in their struggle to overcome,
   or when, with offspring, cattle, lineage, waters, and fields at stake, their two war-cries will dispute with each other.
5. Yet no champion, no overpowering and no bold one, no one thinking himself a fighter has fought against you.
   Indra, none of these is equal to you. You dominate all that have been born.
6. He is master of the manly power of both of these (armies) when the ritual adepts call on him in the clash,
   when, whether an obstacle or a dwelling place rich in men is at issue, the two (armies) in their expansion keep tussling mightily back and forth with one another.
7. So then, when your separate peoples will stir, Indra, become the rescuer and defender (of those,)
   our most manly patrons, who have set us ahead of the stranger, o Indra.
8. It was conceded to you, to your great Indrian power; everything was entirely conceded to you at the Vṛtra-smashing;
   dominion was conceded, victorious might conceded, o Indra worthy of sacrifice, conceded to you by the gods at the victory over men.
9. In just this way for us herd together the contenders in the battles. Indra, subdue the godless ones who oppose (us).
   And with your help, Indra, might we Bharadvājas know (this), as we sing just now at dawn.

VI.26 (467) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins (vss. 1–2) with an appeal to Indra for help in battles and contests, much as in the immediately preceding hymn. The first two verses also play with the word *vā́ja* "prize," perhaps punning on the name of the poet and his bardic clan, Bharad-vāja. The middle part of the hymn (vss. 3–6) gives brief accounts of Indra's battles against various named enemies and his aid to various named mortal allies; in this structure it is very reminiscent of VI.20, and many of the same incidents, with the same, often obscure names, are found in both hymns. The final two verses (7–8) beg Indra to show the same powers in aid of the poet and his patrons. The structure of the hymn is thus both fairly conventional and also symmetrical, with requests to the god in the first two and last two verses and the middle four verses providing previous models for the aid the god is asked to supply.

Stylistically noteworthy is the regular fronting of the personal pronoun. Beginning with verse 2, every half-verse through 5a has a fronted form of the 2nd-person singular pronoun "you" (and usually another one in an even pāda: 2d, 3b, 4d), either nominative *tvā́m* or accusative *tvā́m*. The rest of verse 5 briefly breaks the pattern, which returns in verse 6. Then, interestingly, the 1st person asserts itself: 7a *ahám* "I", 8a *vayám* "we," with 2nd-person genitive *táva* (7b) and instrumental *tváyā* (7c) interspersed. This distribution corresponds to the thematic structure of the hymn, with the recounting to Indra of his own deeds followed by requests of him by us mortals on our own behalf. Verse 7 brings the 1st person "I" and 2nd person "you" into happy conjunction.

1. Hear us, Indra. We are calling to you as we are "boiling over" at the winning of the great prize.
   When the clans clash together at the contest of champions, give us mighty help on the decisive day.
2. To you does the prizewinner, son of a prizewinner, call, at the winning of the great prize to be secured,
   to you, Indra, the surpassing master of settlements, when there are obstacles; to you does the fist-fighter look as he fights for cattle.
3. You spurred the poet [=Uśanā Kāvya] on at the winning of the (sun's) rays. You wrung out Śuṣṇa for the pious Kutsa.
   You struck far away the head of the invulnerable one, intending to do (a deed) worthy to be proclaimed for Atithigva.
4. You brought forward the towering battle-chariot, and helped the bull Daśadyu as he did battle.
   You struck down Tugra for Vetasu, in partnership. You, Indra, strengthened Tuji, the singer.

5. You made that hymn (endowed) with might, Indra, so that you could tear out hundreds and thousands (of goods), o champion.
   You struck the barbarian Śambara down from the mountain and furthered Divodāsa with glittering help.
6. You, reaching elation through the hospitality offerings and the soma juices, put Cumuri to sleep for Dabhīti.
   You, showing favor to Piṭhīnas, in partnership, smashed Raji and his sixty thousand with your power.
7. Might I also, together with my patrons, attain this, the greater favor and might that are yours, Indra,
   when along with you our heroes are praised, you who have our heroes as companions, along with Nahus who provides threefold defense, o strongest one.
8. Might we be your dearest comrades, Indra, at this invocation to heavenly brilliance, o great one.
   Let the son of Pratardana, glorious in dominion, be the most glorious at the smashing of obstacles and the winning of rich stakes.

VI.27 (468) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn traces a satisfying arc from beginning to end: the trajectory is not predictable, but the progress from a large and open question to extreme specificity is neatly handled. It begins with a question, a question all the more open because one of the crucial terms is unspecified (though easily supplied), the repeated pronoun *asya* "of it"—referring, clearly, to soma. The question is what did Indra make or create under the influence "of it," and the surprisingly broad answer given in the responsive verse 2 is "what exists."

The unqualified comprehensiveness of Indra' production—"being," "what exists"—is contrasted with our imperfect knowledge of his powers in verse 3. But even what small proportion of that power we have experienced (vs. 4) was more than sufficient to destroy the Vṛcīvant army of the enemy Varaśikha for the benefit of the poet's patron, Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna—a battle described in verses 4–7. The second half of verse 6 is especially notable for its warrior slang: the phrase "playing the lord's role for an arrow," which also appears in X.27.6, in our opinion refers to warriors' boasting, and "breaking their pots," which many commentators have tried to interpret literally, must show the same use of "pot" for "head" as, for example, German "Kopf" and French "tête." In our opinion the site of the battle is the confluence of two rivers, mentioned by name in verses 5 and 6, and then referred to jointly in verse 7. The dual bovines in that verse have been variously interpreted, but

in our opinion, despite a problem with grammatical gender, the most likely referents are the rivers, in a phrase very reminiscent of one (III.33.1) describing two rivers as mother cows licking each other in the famous hymn III.33, the dialogue between the poet Viśvāmitra and two rivers.

The final verse is a dānastuti, praising and detailing the gift made by Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna to the poet. The poet gives his patron the epithets "bounteous," a standard qualification of Indra (as in vs. 3 in this very hymn), and "universal king," also regularly used of Indra (among other divinities). He thus verbally associates his patron with the unlimited power of Indra, as it was portrayed earlier in the hymn.

1. What did Indra create in the exhilaration of it, what at the drinking of it? what in the fellowship of it?
   Or those [=priests] who were there with joy at the installation of it—what did those previous ones acquire? what do the current ones?
2. Indra created what exists in the exhilaration of it, what exists at the drinking of it; what exists in the fellowship of it.
   Or those [=priests] who were there with joy at the installation of it—the previous ones acquired what exists; the current ones what exists.
3. But yet we do not know your whole greatness, nor bounteousness, o bounteous one,
   nor every current benefit (of yours). O Indra, your (whole) Indrian strength has not shown itself.
4. (But) there *has* appeared just that Indrian strength of yours with which you smashed the posterity of Varaśikha,
   when from the blast of your mace when it was smashed down, from just its sound, their farthest (division) shattered, Indra.
5. Indra smashed the posterity of Varaśikha, doing his best for Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna,
   when at the Hariyūpīyā (River) he smashed the Vṛcīvants in the front division, and the rear (division) shattered from fear.
6. O much-invoked Indra, at the Yavyāvatī (River), though they were a hundred thirty altogether and armor-clad, with a yen for fame,
   the Vṛcīvants, playing the lord's role for an arrow, breaking their own "pots," came to failed ends.
7. He for whom the two ruddy cows [=rivers?], seeking good pasturage, acted the go-between as they licked each other again and again,
   he handed Turvaśa and the Vṛcīvants over to Sṛñjaya, doing his best for the son of Devavāta.
8. O Agni, chariot-steeds by twos and twenty head of cattle together with brides does the bounteous, universal king give to me—
   Abhyāvartin the son of Cayamāna. Difficult to attain is this priestly gift of the Pārthavas.

VI.28 (469) The Cows and Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 2–4, anuṣṭubh 8

Although this hymn is found right in the middle of the Indra cycle, the Anukramaṇī assigns most of the verses in this hymn to the cows (1, 3–8c), with a few (2, 8d) to the cows or Indra. The hymn was later used as a blessing for cows as they return home, but it may originally have been intended to bless the cows given as a dakṣiṇā (priestly gift) as they enter the home of their new owner. According to the Vaitāna Śrauta Sūtra 21.24, the sacrificer awaited the cows intended for the dakṣiṇā with the hymn Atharvaveda IV.21 (=ṚV VI.28.1–7). It is worth noting that almost the last word of the preceding hymn (VI.27.8d) is *dákṣiṇā*, and this may have invited the placement of this hymn here.

The safety of the cows of the pious man as they graze is the subject of much of the hymn, and the various dangers that could befall them are detailed: being stolen by a thief or in a cattle raid, getting lost, going to the slaughterhouse. They are also given rather grandiose identifications in verse 5, including with Indra: 5c is a clear echo, almost to parody, of the famous hymn II.12 with its refrain: "he, o peoples, is Indra."

The final verse is in a different meter, and as it is not part of the Atharvaveda version of this hymn, it was probably originally separate. In form it is a magical exhortation and makes use of the only slightly euphemistic verb *upa-√pṛc* "mix sexually." The verse obviously expresses the wish that the cows become impregnated, and thus picks up the adjective "bearing offspring" in verses 2 and 7. The use of the near deictic "right here" modifying "the inseminator" suggests that the performance of the spell has a physical component in addition to the verbal, as is regularly found in the Atharvaveda.

1. The cows have come here and have made (the house) blessed. Let them find a place in the cow-stall; let them find enjoyment among us.
   Here should those of many colors be, bearing offspring, as through many dawns they give milk for Indra.
2. Indra does his best for the man who sacrifices and delivers in full. He gives more; he does not steal what belongs to him.
   Making wealth increase more and more just for him, he establishes the man devoted to the gods in undivided virgin land.
3. These will not be lost, and no thief will take them by deception. No enemy will venture against their meandering course.
   Those (cows) with which he sacrifices and gives to the gods, he keeps company with them as their cowherd for a very long time.
4. No dusty-necked steed gets to them (in a cattle raid), nor do they go to the place for dressing [=slaughterhouse].
   The cows of the mortal who sacrifices wander far across wide-ranging (space) free of fear.

5. Fortune has appeared to me as cows; Indra as cows. The draught of the first soma is cows.
   These cows here—they, o peoples, are Indra. I am just searching, with my heart and mind, for Indra.
6. You fatten even the thin man, o cows. You make even one without beauty to have a lovely face.
   You make the house blessed, o you of blessed speech. Your vigor is declared loftily in the assemblies.
7. Bearing offspring, cropping good pasturage, drinking pure waters at a good watering hole—
   let not a thief be master of you, nor one who utters evil. Might the lance of Rudra avoid you.
8. Right here is the inseminator: let there be inseminating right here in these cows,
   right here when the semen of the bull (is here), right here when your virility (is here), o Indra.

VI.29 (470) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The most notable feature in this hymn is the theme of "attachment," which is played with semantically and syntactically in verses 2–4. In verse 2 it is Indra's own powers that are attached to him, or rather to his hand (see also the mace in hand in vs. 1), but in the following two verses ritual elements offered by men are the attachments. Since the final verse (6) is a summary verse, introduced as often by *evā́* "in this way," verses 2–4 constitute an omphalos defined by the attachment theme. Interestingly, the only one of Indra's great deeds mentioned in this hymn is his forceful *separation* of heaven and earth (vs. 5b), which provides a conceptual opposite to the attachment elsewhere.

The larger concern of the hymn is the reciprocal relation between men, who offer Indra sacrifice and praise poetry, and Indra, who places his power in the service of men and offers them gifts. This relationship is announced in the first verse, especially in the word "partnership, comradeship" in the first pāda, and is also conveyed iconically by the "attachment" of the words "Indra" and "men," which occur next to each other initial in the opening pāda of the hymn, and again in 4c (*índraṃ [vo] náraḥ*). The relationship between the god and his worshipers is here modeled on that between the poet-sacrificer and his patron. Indra is in fact called a "patron" in verse 5 and described as providing the priestly gift (dakṣiṇā) in verse 3, which is the task and prerogative of a patron.

1. The men serve Indra for you [=patrons or priests] for the sake of his partnership and benevolence, as they go on finding pleasure in the great one,
   for he whose hand holds the mace is the giver of a great (thing). Sacrifice to the great and delightful one for help.
2. To which hand manly powers are firmly attached, (as) a chariot driver is to his golden chariot,
   (as) reins are to the two brawny fists, (as) bullish horses yoked together are to the road.
3. For your glory do our friendly services firmly attach themselves to your two feet [=do homage]. As the bold mace-bearer, (you) provide the priestly gift;
   wearing a fragrant cloak, (lovely) to be seen like the sun, you have become vigorous, o dancer.
4. (But) the pressed soma has become the most firmly attached (to him), in whose (presence) the cooked food is cooked and there are roasted grains,
   while the men who create the sacred formulations are praising Indra and reciting their hymns as the men most cherished by the gods.
5. No limit has been set for this vast power of yours. He forced apart the two world-halves with his greatness.
   With his help our patron [=Indra] brings these things to fulfillment as he keeps thrusting, as if driving his herds together to the waters.
6. Just in this way let lofty Indra be easily called—the warrior with golden lips, with his help that needs no help,
   for in this way was he born with unequalled, surpassing might. He will strike down many obstacles [/Vṛtras] and Dasyus.

VI.30 (471) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is entirely a celebration of Indra's cosmogonic and cosmos-maintaining deeds and powers. The only possible indications of a human dimension in the hymn are the oblique reference to the soma sacrifice in the first pāda of the hymn, the granting of good things in the second pāda, and the ruminative "I think" at the beginning of the second verse. The pace of the hymn is brisk, but this straightforward recital of the high points of Indra's career has a pleasing balance and variety in its expressions.

1. He has been strengthened even more for the heroic deed; he alone, the unaging, apportions good things.
   Indra projects beyond heaven and earth: the two worlds are equivalent to just half of him.
2. Therefore I think his lordly power to be lofty. Those things that he upholds, no one alters.
   Day after day the sun becomes visible. The strong-willed one distributed the seats widely.
3. Even today, even now, this is the labor of the rivers, since you dug out a way for them, Indra.
   The mountains settled down like (flies) settling on food. By you were the airy realms fixed fast, o you of strong will.
4. This is really true: there exists no other like you. Indra, no god nor mortal is greater.
   You smashed the serpent that lay around the flood; you sent the waters surging toward the sea.
5. You (sent) forth the waters, (opened) wide the doors in every direction. Indra, you broke the fastness of the mountain.
   You became the king of the moving world and of the settled domains, begetting at once the sun, heaven, and dawn.

VI.31 (472) Indra

Suhotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 4

This hymn begins by proclaiming Indra's power over all peoples and all the cosmic and earthly realms (vss. 1–2), before focusing on several of his famous battles and the mortals he aided in them (vss. 3–4). The final verse exhorts Indra to perform the same martial services for us.

The most interesting verse is the first, where at first glance the logical connections among the three clauses are not clear. But the contrast between the singleness and unification of the first half of the verse and the division in the second seems to be the point. Indra is the single lord of wealth because he can gather all peoples just in his two hands—peoples who were otherwise disunited and quarreling over the various goods of existence. Indra's act of unification in this verse seems to be a kind of wishful thinking on the poet's part, however, for the battles depicted in verses 3 and 4 are the result of disunity, and in verse 5 we call on Indra for aid in the same sorts of disputations found in 1cd. The "separate peoples" (*carṣaṇī*) of verse 1 also return in verse 5; the poet wishes to see them as a sort of universal audience for the fame of himself and his people, brought about by Indra's intervention on their behalf.

1. You, o wealth-lord, have become the single (lord) of wealth: you have taken (all) the communities in your hands, Indra.

The separate peoples, disputants, were disputing with each other over progeny and posterity, the waters, and the sun.

2. Through fear of you, Indra, all the earthly realms, though unshakeable, are brought to shaking.
Heaven and earth, the mountains, and the forests—all that is firmly fixed takes fright at your drive.
3. You, Indra—fight along with Kutsa against the insatiable Śuṣṇa, the demon of bad harvest, in the quest for cattle,
and against his ten before the (ritual) mealtime. Then you steal the wheel of the sun. You have toiled at your labors.
4. You smashed down hundreds of impregnable fortresses of the Dasyu Śambara,
when, able one, with your ability you did your best for Divodāsa the presser and for Bharadvāja the singer, for (them to obtain) goods, o you who can be bought with the pressing.
5. Mount your fearsome chariot, you real "real thing," powerfully manly, for the great battle.
O you in the vanguard, drive here toward me with your help, and proclaim our fame, famous one, to the separate peoples.

VI.32 (473) Indra

Suhotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Unlike the common practice, whereby the final verse of the hymn constitutes the poet's summing up of his hymn, in this hymn the first verse serves this purpose, in meta-relationship with what follows. The remaining verses, each of which begins with the pronoun *sá* "he," constitute the praise the poet announced in verse 1. Verses 2–3 refer to the Vala myth, with special attention paid to Indra's companions in this enterprise, the unnamed Aṅgirases, and verse 5 may be an oblique account of the aftermath of the Vṛtra slaying. In verse 4 Indra is exhorted to grant the singer powers and riches.

1. For him I have fashioned with my mouth these words, unprecedented, best of many, most wealful—for the great hero, powerful and precipitous,
conferring abundance, bearing the mace, stalwart.
2. He made the two mothers of the poets shine with the sun; he broke the rock as he was being hymned.
Bellowing [/being eager] along with the very attentive versifiers, he let loose the binding of the ruddy cows.

3. He, the doer of many deeds, triumphed every time when cattle were at stake, in company with the conveyors (of songs), the versifiers with their knees fixed.
Acting as comrade along with his comrades, the smasher of fortresses broke the firmly fixed fortresses, being a poet along with poets.
4. As great one, drive here to the singer with (riches) to clothe (him), with prizes, and with your great unbridled powers,
with (riches) bringing many heroes, o bull of the settlements, you who long for songs—for good faring.
5. He, launched in a surge with power along with his coursers, Indra, overcoming the precipitous, (sent) the waters (surging) to the right.
Sent surging in just that way, without turning aside, day after day (the waters) have toiled at their purpose, not to be neglected.

VI.33 (474) Indra

Śunahotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

A martial hymn. The poet reminds Indra that he will receive entreaties for help from all sides in the combat (vs. 2, using language almost identical to that in nearby VI.31.1), but begs him to help our side alone, in battles and in contests. The poetry is for the most part quite straightforward, except for the enigmatic expression in verse 3 (probably not coincidentally the middle verse), in which Indra's weapons against formidable enemies appear to be "well-placed cloaks." This expression has been much discussed, and a number of scholars have opted to emend it. But it likely refers to Indra's penchant for shape-shifting disguises in combat. Moreover, the word "well-placed" (*súdhita*) is phonologically close to a word for "hatchet" (*svádhiti*), and this pun may well be lurking in the simile about trees.

1. What is the most mighty, o Indra, give that to us: your (battle-)ecstasy, very superior and rich in gifts, o bull,
which, possessing good horses, will win a mass of good horses and will defeat obstacles and enemies in battles.
2. For the separate peoples, disputants, call (separately) on you for help at the contest of champions.
You dispersed the niggards through (the inspiration of) the inspired poets, and it is just through your aid that the charger is the winner of the prize.
3. You, o champion, smite both kinds of enemies, the Dāsa and the Ārya obstacles,
like trees (with hatchets), with your well-placed cloaks. Break (them) apart in the battles, o most manly of men.

4. You, Indra—by your unstinting help become our lifelong companion and helper for our strengthening,
   when, in the winning of the sun, we call upon you as we fight, facing the other side in battles, o champion.
5. (So) should you be for us, now and for the future, Indra. Be there for us in mercy and in superiority.
   Singing in just this way, might we be under the protection of the great one and on the decisive day be the best winners of cattle.

VI.34 (475) Indra

Śunahotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The first verse of this hymn is a remarkably condensed expression of the poetic economy: Indra is both the recipient of praise songs and the source of inspiration for those poetic thoughts. Moreover, all poets, past and present, vie to attract Indra's attention, each with his own poem. The rest of the hymn develops these thoughts. Verses 2–3 continue the theme of multiple poets focusing on a single object, Indra, and then provide a transition to the final two verses (4–5), which celebrate the benefits that Indra receives from praise and sacrifice in a manner that indicates that our praise and sacrifice are happening now.

1. Many songs have converged on you, Indra, and out from you go inspired thoughts far and wide.
   Previously and now, the seers' songs of praise, their recitations and hymns, have contended over Indra.
2. The skillful one, who is called upon by many and welcomed by many, who alone is celebrated by many with sacrifices—
   like a chariot yoked for great power, Indra is to be cheered on.
3. Indra, whom neither insightful thoughts nor voices harm; they just approach him, making him strong.
   When a hundred, when a thousand praisers sing to him who longs for song, that is weal for him.
4. This is (weal) for him: seeking attachment, the soma has been set firmly in Indra, like the two shining ones, (sun and) moon, in heaven.
   Our invocations along with our sacrifices have entirely strengthened (him), like a man in the desert when waters con(verge) on him.
5. This is (weal) for him: a great song for him, a praise hymn for Indra has been spoken through our composed thoughts,
   so that, in the great overcoming of Vṛtra [/obstacles], Indra will be our lifelong helper and strengthener.

VI.35 (476) Indra

Nara Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Unlike the last hymn, which calmly contemplates the good our praise is doing for Indra, this hymn inquires impatiently about the reward we should receive for this activity, a mood conveyed by the peremptory questions of the first three verses and the commands of verse 4.

The final verse (5) is syntactically very difficult and has given rise to a variety of interpretations, especially of the first half-verse. We consider it a reference to the Vala myth (as is clear at least in the mention of the Aṅgirases in d and also probably of the doors in b): the poet hopes that the mythic opening of the Vala cave and the good things that emerged from it will serve as a model for Indra's wished-for bounties now. The "community" is probably both the poet's own people and the Aṅgirases as comrades of Indra.

1. When will the sacred formulations find their resting place in the chariot? When will you give to the praiser what will prosper a thousandfold?
   When will you clothe his praise song with wealth? When will you make his insights have prizes as jewels?
2. Just when will it be, Indra, that you will place in your own nest our men with your men, our heroes with your heroes? Win the contests!
   With cattle at stake, you will win cattle three times over. Indra, grant to us sunlit brilliance.
3. Just when will it be, Indra, that you will make the sacred formulation provided with all goods for the singer, o strongest one?
   When will you team your teams, as (we do our) insights? When will you go to the calls whose bounty is cattle?
4. Lay on for the singer nourishments whose bounty is cattle, whose glitter is horses, whose fame is prizes of victory.
   Swell the good-milking cow with refreshments, Indra. Might you make them shine very bright among the Bharadvājas.
5. This community here and now do I sing, as (I did) also at another time, when as champion, able one, you (opened) wide the doors.
   May I not miss out on the milk-cow whose milk is clear (soma) [/semen]. Quicken the Āṅgirases, o inspired poet, with your sacred formulation.

VI.36 (477) Indra

Nara Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

An unqualified celebration of Indra's complete power and his control of all beings and things, both earthly and heavenly. It is hoped that the peoples' offerings to

Indra, the soma (vs. 1), the sacrificial offerings (vs. 2), and the songs (vs. 3), will provoke answering generosity (vs. 4). This reciprocal relationship is economically expressed in the last half of verse 5.

1. Completely yours are the exhilarating (drinks) stemming from all peoples, and completely the riches that come from the earth.
   Completely have you become the apportioner of prizes, as you uphold your lordship among the gods.
2. The people have sacrificed fore and after offerings to his might.
   Completely have they conceded to his heroic power
   and to the headstrong charger pulling at the reins. They bend their will (to him) at the smashing of Vṛtra [/obstacles].
3. Directed to the same goal, his forms of help, his bullish powers, his manly powers, and his teams accompany Indra.
   Like rivers to the sea, the songs whose gusts are solemn words enter him of broad expanse.
4. As you are sung, let loose the wellspring of wealth, Indra, and of much-glittering goods.
   You have become the unequalled lord of peoples, you alone the king of all creation.
5. You who seek friendship—hear what is worthy to be heard: Like heaven over the earth, sur(mount) the riches of the stranger,
   so that you will keep finding enjoyment in us and you will keep showing yourself with your strength and your vigor generation after generation.

VI.37 (478) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The first three verses follow the model of a "journey" hymn, but with a twist. The fallow bays of verse 1 are Indra's familiar horses, bringing his chariot to the sacrifice, but the same word (*hárayaḥ*) in verse 2 refers to the tawny soma drops. In verse 3 we return to the real horses, qualified as "charging straight on," just like the soma in the previous verse. The mention of Vāyu in verse 3 identifies the ritual in question as the Morning Pressing.

The remaining two verses of the hymn (4–5) do not continue the journey theme. Instead Indra is configured as a (divine) patron (vs. 5), who gives the priestly gift to the (human) patrons (vs. 4). See VI.29 for a similar identification of Indra with the sacrificial patron.

1. Close to here let your yoked fallow bays convey your chariot, which brings all desirable things, mighty Indra,
   for even the weakling calls upon you, (as well as the man) of solar glory. Might we achieve success as your feasting companions today.
2. The fallow bays [=soma drops] have gone forth to their labor in the wooden cup, and while being purified, they have come to be charging straight on.
   Indra should be the first to drink of this (soma) of ours, as the heaven-ruling king of soma's exhilaration.
3. Making their run here, the chariot-horses should convey powerful Indra on (the chariot) with good wheels,
   as they are charging straight on toward fame. Never should Vāyu's immortal (drink) give out.
4. Indra, the most excellent, the most powerfully ranging of the bounteous ones, sets in motion his priestly gift—
   with which, mace-bearer, you evade difficult straits and you apportion bounties to our patrons, bold one.
5. Indra is the giver of the enduring prize. Let Indra increase through the songs, his greatness increased;
   let Indra be the best smiter of Vṛtra [/the obstacle] as a consummate warrior. Our patron brings these things to fulfillment as he keeps thrusting.

VI.38 (479) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The context of this hymn is the morning ritual, and its aim is to attract Indra to it by our invocation, which is the subject of the first two verses. In verse 1 Agni seems to carry the invocation heavenward; in the second the invocation turns Indra here. The strength Indra will derive from both praise and sacrifice occupy the next two verses (3–4), and the final verse summarizes our attempts to attract him and the benefits he will provide us.

Especially in the first two verses the poet is coy about reference, and the audience must guess the subjects of the verbs and the referents of the pronouns until the last pāda of verse 2.

1. He [=Agni?] has drunk from here; the most glittering one will carry up our great, heaven-bright invocation to Indra.
   On his journey he of good gifts will win a more admirable insightful thought as present for the divine folk.

2. Even from a distance, his two ears take residence here. It will sound—
when speaking of Indra, it thunders:
this invocation to the gods should turn him—Indra—here toward me,
this one just now being recited.
3. With my highest insight, with my recitations I have roared for you to
ageless Indra, born of old.
Not only have the sacred formulations and the songs together been
placed in him, but in Indra the great praise puts strength.
4. Indra, whom the sacrifice will strengthen and the soma, (whom) the
sacred formulation will strengthen, and the songs, solemn words, and
thoughts—
so strengthen him at the coming of dawn from night. The months,
autumns, and days will strengthen Indra.
5. In just this way we now would seek to attract him here—him who was
born for vanquishing, who has been strengthened, and not by halves,
for famed generosity,
him, great and mighty, for help in the overcoming of obstacles [/Vṛtra], o
inspired poet.

VI.39 (480) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous hymn, this one is tied to the here-and-now of the ritual situation; also like the previous hymn, this one plays games with reference. The subject of the hymn is really soma, but the word "soma" does not appear in it, and in the middle verses of the hymn, which are insistently about soma, the poet intentionally misleads us about the referent.

In verse 1 a long series of adjectives in the genitive describing an unidentified being is resolved by the verb "you have drunk"—the subject is Indra, and the genitive referent must be soma. The three middle verses (2–4) form an omphalos defined by the repeated near deictic "this one here." This pronoun should have a referent in the immediate vicinity of the poet, but the first of these verses concerns what is clearly the Vala myth, which invites the audience to supply Indra as the subject. It is only as the sequence unfolds (and especially with the specification of "this one" as a "drop" in vs. 3) that it becomes clear that soma is taking the role of Indra is these verses.

For a similar covert coding of soma, there by the use of the genitive pronoun *asya* "of it, of this one" see VI.27.1–2.

1. Of the gladdening poet, of the heavenly draft-horse, of the one of
inspired thought, of the speaking honey,

of this companion of ours have you drunk, o god. Bind refreshments
tipped with cows to the singer.
2. This one here eagerly (breaks) the rock en(closing) the ruddy (cows),
as the one whose yoke is truth, having been yoked by those of true
insights;
he breaks apart the unbreakable back of the Vala cave. Indra will fight
against the Paṇis with words.
3. This drop here lights up the unlit nights in the evening and at dawn
through the autumns, o Indra.
This one they established to be ever the beacon of the days: he has made
the dawns to have blazing birth.
4. This one here, himself shining, makes the unshining ones shine. This one
makes the many (dawns) dawn forth through truth.
This one speeds with his horses whose yoke is truth, with his sun-finding
(wheel-)nave, as he fills the domains.
5. Being sung now, ancient king, swell many refreshments for the giving of
good things to the singer.
Give waters, plants without poison, trees, cows, chargers, and men for
the praising.

VI.40 (481) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is for the most part a typical invitation to Indra, to drive to our sacrifice and drink the soma. However, it is chronologically backward. The first two verses urge Indra to drink, the first opening with a peremptory command, "Indra, drink!" The next two verses (3–4) command Indra to "drive here," the logically prior action. Only in the last verse do the two actions occur together, in the temporally appropriate order. The imperative "drink!" (*píba*) found as the second word in the hymn is matched in the last pāda of the hymn by another imperative "take a drink" (*pāhi*), likewise second in its pāda, both verbs formed to the same root but in the present and aorist systems respectively.

Note also the reciprocal expressions in the final pādas of verses 1 and 4: in verse 1 it is Indra who will create vitality for the singer and the sacrifice; in verse 4 by contrast the sacrifice creates vitality for Indra.

The final word of the hymn, "with the Maruts," establishes the Midday Pressing as the ritual in question. The Maruts are also obliquely referred to in the first verse, in the phrase "amid your troop."

1. Indra, drink! It is pressed for you for your exhilaration. Unhitch your
two fallow bays; let loose your two partners.

And sing forth here having sat down amid your troop. Then create vitality for the singer for sacrifice.

2. Drink of this, of which you drank when you were just born, Indra, for your exhilaration and for your resolve, o you who confer abundance.
This drop have the cows, the men, the waters, and the stone together impelled for you—for it to be fully drunk.
3. With the fire kindled, Indra, the soma has been pressed. Let your fallow bays, the best conveyors, convey you here.
With a mind seeking you, I call upon you again and again. Drive here, Indra, for our great good faring.
4. Drive here. Over and over you have driven with your great and eager mind to the soma-drinking, Indra.
You will listen to these sacred formulations of ours, and then the sacrifice will create vitality for your body.
5. When, Indra, on the decisive day, whether (you are) remote or in your own seat, or wherever you are...
from there (drive) with your team to our sacrifice to help us. Take a drink, joined in revelry with the Maruts, o you who long for the songs.

VI.41 (482) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Another invitation to Indra to drink the soma. The usual "drive" theme is also present (vss. 1, 4, 5), but backgrounded. The emphasis is on the attractions of the particular soma offered. Only in the last pāda of the last verse does the poet ask Indra for something in return.

1. Free of anger, drive here to the sacrifice. For you do the pressed soma drops purify themselves.
Like cows toward their own home, o mace-bearer, come here, Indra, as the first of those worthy of the sacrifice.
2. Your throat, which is well-fashioned, which is the widest, with which you are always drinking the wave of honey,
take a drink with it. The Adhvaryu has set (the soma) forth for you. Let your mace turn itself to the pursuit of cows, Indra.
3. This drop, the soma, a bull of all colors, has been brought to perfection for bullish Indra.
Drink it, o powerful master of bays, (chariot-)mounter—this of which you are master from of old, which is your food.

4. Pressed soma is better than unpressed, Indra, and this (soma) here is even better, for the discriminating to enjoy.
Drive here to this sacrifice, you overcomer. Through it fulfill all your powers.
5. We are calling you, Indra: drive nearby. The soma will be fit for your body.
O you of a hundred resolves, bring yourself to exhilaration on the pressed (drinks). Further us in battles and among the clans.

VI.42 (483) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–3, bṛhatī 4

Yet another hymn concerned almost entirely with Indra's soma-drinking, but unlike the immediately preceding hymns, Indra is not directly urged to come and drink the soma. Rather, Indra is in the 3rd person throughout, and commands are issued to a single individual (vss. 1, 4) and to a group (vss. 2–3), to serve Indra. None of the addressees is identified until verse 4, with its vocative addressing the Adhvaryu. He is likely therefore also to be the addressee in verse 1; presumably the priests as a whole are addressed by the plural imperatives in the internal verses.

In this otherwise ritually focused hymn, the very specific anxiety expressed in the last half-verse comes as some surprise, a surprise mirrored in the meter, with the 12/8 half-verse contrasting with the 8/8 structure that has prevailed throughout. This wondering question about Indra's possible aid against the boastful slanderer functionally fills the usual hymn-final slot of direct plea to the god for help, despite its indirection.

1. Present (it) to him who desires to drink, who knows all things,
to the superior man who comes fittingly, who comes regularly, who does not lag behind.
2. Go toward him, the best of the soma-drinkers, with the soma juices,
to Indra possessing the silvery drink, with tankards, with the pressed drops.
3. When you attend on him with the pressed soma drops,
the wise one knows of it all, but he boldly hastens just to that one [=soma].
4. Just to this one here [=Indra], o Adhvaryu, bring forth the pressed (juice) of the stalk.
Surely he will rescue (us) from the calumny of anyone who boastfully claims high breeding?

VI.43 (484) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: uṣṇih

A simple hymn, in which the refrain (pāda c of each verse) offers Indra soma to drink, and the first half of each verse consists of a definitional relative clause referring to Indra's deeds in his soma-exhilaration. As often, the pattern set in the rest of the hymn is modified but not entirely broken in the final verse: verses 1–3 contain the syntagm *yásya... máda-* "(in) whose exhilaration," while the final verse substitutes the participle *mandānā́* "finding exhilaration" for the etymologically related noun *máda*, and also inserts a part of the soma plant, its stalk, on which the relative pronoun is dependent.

1. In whose exhilaration you subdued Śambara for Divodāsa—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!
2. Whose sharp-pressed exhilaration, whose middle and end, you guard—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!
3. In whose exhilaration you set loose from the rock the cows fixed firm within—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!
4. Finding exhilaration in whose stalk, you acquire the capacity for generosity—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!

VI.44 (485) Indra

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
24 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–6, triṣṭubh or virāj 7, 9, virāj 8, triṣṭubh 10–24, arranged in tr̥cas

A composite hymn placed toward the end of the Indra cycle in Maṇḍala VI, the hymn consists of eight tr̥cas, the first two (vss. 1–6) in anuṣṭubh, the third (vss. 7–9) in a mixture of triṣṭubh and virāj, and the remaining five (vss. 10–24) in triṣṭubh. Several of the tr̥cas are rhetorically unified: 1–3 with its repeated second half-verse following a definitional relative clause; 19–21 with its insistent "bull" theme; 22–24 with its repeated half-verse-initial "this one here" (*ayám*) referring to soma. The others have less obvious internal unity, though there is often a continuity of theme or subject. There is also no visible external unity among the tr̥cas collected in this "hymn," though it seldom strays far from Indra and the soma-drinking, the topic of many of the immediately preceding hymns. Indeed, Oldenberg (1888: 203) suggests that VI.44 owes its position to the similarity between the refrain of its first tr̥ca and the refrain of VI.43.

1. The one that is wealthiest, o wealthy one, that is most brilliant through its brilliance,
   the pressed soma—that is your exhilarating drink, o Indra, lord of independent power.
2. The capable one that is yours, o powerfully capable one, the giver of wealth and of thoughts,
   the pressed soma—that is your exhilarating drink, o Indra, lord of independent power.
3. The one through which (you are) like one grown strong by (his own) power and like one overpowering by his own forms of help,
   the pressed soma—that is your exhilarating drink, o Indra, lord of independent power.

4. I will sing for you to this lord of power, who never smites (us) away,
   to Indra, the all-conquering superior man, most bounteous, possessing all domains.
5. He whom songs make strong, the lord of overpowering generosity—
   his tempestuous force do the two world-halves, the goddesses, respect.
6. It (is mine) to lay on your behalf, with the power of solemn speech, the underlayer for Indra,
   whose forms of helps are like inspired words, since, dwelling together, they spread apart in their ascent.

7. Our newer ally [=Soma] has found the skill. Having been drunk, he has perceived what is better for the gods.
   Having won with the brawny racers [?], in making broad shelter he became a protector for his comrades.
8. On the path of truth, the ritual adept has been drunk. The gods have set their minds for glory.
   Acquiring the name of "great" by (ritual) speeches, the one worthy of the quest has disclosed his wondrous form to be seen.
9. Bestow the most brilliant skill on us. Repel the many hostilities of the peoples.
   Make our vitality higher through your abilities. Help us in the winning of the stake.

10. Indra, we have become ready just for you, the giver, you generous possessor of the fallow bays. Do not lose the track.
    No one has shown himself as our friend among mortals. Do they not call you a rouser (even) of the weak?
11. Give us not to exhaustion, bull. Let us not come to harm in our comradeship with you, the wealthy.
    Many are the tributes for you among the peoples, Indra. Smite the non-pressers; rip away those who don't deliver.

12. Like the thunderer the rain clouds, Indra stirs up bounties of horses and cattle.
It is you who provide nourishment to the bard from of old. Let those without gifts not trick you away from (our) benefactor.

13. O Adhvaryu, hero, give of the pressed (soma drinks) to great Indra, for he is its king,
he who has grown strong by the previous and the present songs of singing seers.
14. In its exhilaration, knowing many shapes, Indra smashed unopposable obstacles.
Pour forth for him the honeyed soma, for the belipped hero to drink.
15. Let Indra be the one who drinks the pressed soma, who smashes the obstacle [/Vṛtra] with his mace in his exhilaration,
who goes to the sacrifice, even from far away, who is the good helper of insights, providing nourishment to the bard.

16. Here is this drinking cup, giving drink to Indra. Indra's dear immortal (drink) has been drunk,
so that it will exhilarate the god for the sake of his good favor and will keep hatred and constraint away from us.
17. Becoming exhilarated by it, o champion, smash your rivals and your foes, both kin and non-kin, o bounteous one.
Those with weapons aimed at us, setting their sights on us—pulverize and smash them, Indra, (for them to become) far away.
18. Once more, in these our battles, bounteous Indra, make for us a great wide space and easy passage.
Go halves with our patrons, Indra, in the conquering of the waters, of life and lineage.

19. Your fallow bays, the bulls that have been yoked, the steeds with their bullish chariot and with their bullish reins,
the bulls that convey your mace—let them, well-yoked, convey you here in our direction for bullish exhilaration.
20. The bulls have mounted the wooden cup for you, o bull, like waves spraying ghee as they bring exhilaration.
Indra, to you, the bullish bull, they present soma from out of the (drops) pressed by bulls.
21. You are the bullish bull of heaven and of earth, the bullish bull of the rivers and of the standing waters.
O bull, for bullish you the drop has swelled, the sweet sap, the honeyed drink, to your liking.

22. This god here, being born with strength, with Indra as his yokemate, blocked the Paṇi [/niggard].

This one here, the drop, stole the weapons of his own father, the tricks of the unkindly one.
23. This one gave the dawns a good husband; this one placed light within the sun.
This one found the threefold immortal one hidden in heaven among the third realms of light.
24. This one propped apart heaven and earth; this one yoked the chariot with seven reins.
This one, Soma, by his ability, secures the cooked (milk) within the cows, the wellspring with its ten fastenings: Soma!

VI.45 (486) Indra

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
33 verses: gāyatrī, except atiniccṛt 29, anuṣṭubh 33, arranged in tṛcas

Like the preceding hymn, this one is composed of tṛcas, the first ten to Indra, the last one (vss. 31–33) a dānastuti to the patron Bṛbu. Given its position in the Indra cycle, it is unlikely to have been originally a single hymn, but there are some themes that keep recurring throughout the hymn, such as the comparison of Indra with a cow or calf (vss. 7, 22, 25–26, 28), the sacred formulation as a vehicle for Indra (vss. 4, 7, 19), and the stake that is set as a prize in a contest (vss. 2, 11–13, 15). However, rhetorical unity within tṛcas seems almost entirely lacking.

1. Who with good leading led Turvaśa and Yadu here from afar,
he is Indra, our youthful comrade.
2. Placing vitality even in the uninspired, even with a steed lacking speed,
Indra is the winner of the stake that is set.
3. Great is his guidance and many are the encomia for him.
His help does not perish.

4. Comrades, chant and sing forth to him whose vehicle is the sacred formulation,
for he is great solicitude for us.
5. You, o Vṛtra-smasher, are the helper of one, of two,
and for such as we are.
6. Only you lead (us) beyond hatreds; you make (us) proclaimers of solemn speech;
and you are called rich in heroes by superior men.

7. To the formulator whose vehicle is the sacred formulation, to the comrade worthy of verses
do I call with my songs, as to a cow to be milked,

8. In whose two hands all good things are at home, now as before—
(in the hands) of the hero, victorious in battles.
9. (Tear) apart even the strongholds of the peoples, o possessor of the stone and lord of power;
tear (apart) their tricks, you who can't be bowed.

10. It is just you, o Indra, you real one, you drinker of soma and lord of prizes,
that we have called upon, seeking fame—
11. Just you, who were before or who are now to be called upon when the stake is set.
Hear our call!
12. With insights as our steeds, (might we win) steeds and prizes worthy of fame, o Indra;
with you might we win the stake that is set.

13. You became great when the stake was set, o Indra, you hero who longs for songs,
and the one worth tussling for at the raid.
14. Your help that has the quickest speed, o smasher of foes—
with that impel our chariot.
15. As the best charioteer, with our chariot on the attack,
win, o winner, the stake that is set.

16. Praise only him, who alone was born as the limitless lord of the separate peoples,
having a bullish will.
17. You who were the only friend with help, the kindly comrade of the singers,
have mercy on us, Indra.
18. Set your mace in your hands to smash the demons, mace-bearer.
You should overpower your opponents.

19. The ancient yokemate of riches, the comrade who spurs on the weak,
the one who most has the sacred formulation as his vehicle—upon him do I call.
20. For he alone is lord of all the good things of the earth,
the rich one who most longs for songs.
21. (Coming) here with your teams, fulfill our desire with prizes of horses and of cows, lord of cows, acting boldly.

22. Sing this at the pressing to the warrior called upon by many,
(this) that is weal for the able one as if for a cow.
23. The good one will not hold back his gift of a prize of cattle
when he will hear these songs.

24. For the smiter of Dasyus will certainly go forth to somebody's cattle enclosure;
with his powers he will open it up.

25. These songs bellow out again and again to you, o you of a hundred resolves,
like mothers to their calf, Indra.
26. Partnership with you is difficult to attain. You are, o hero, the cow for him who seeks cattle.
Become the horse for him who seeks horses.
27. Find exhilaration from the stalk, then, to show great generosity with your own person.
You will not put your praiser to scorn.

28. These songs come near to you at every pressing, o you who long for songs,
as milk-cows do their calf—
29. (You,) the first among many at the verbal contest of the many praiser-singers,
who compete for the prize with their prizes.
30. Let ours be the praise song that best conveys you nearest, Indra.
Impel us toward great wealth.

31. Bṛbu has stood upon the highest head of the niggards [/Paṇis];
(he is) as broad of girth as the Ganges—
32. (He) whose propitious gift in the thousands, at a speed like the wind's, is ready for giving all at once.
33. So then do all our bards always hymn here, away from (the sacrifice) of the stranger,
Bṛbu, the best giver of thousands, the patron, the best winner of thousands.

VI.46 (487) Indra

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
14 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Like the previous two hymns, this one has too many verses for its position in the Indra cycle, though its division into the two-verse pragātha units may account for its placement. Nonetheless, the hymn seems to be a conceptual unity, rather than a collection of independent pragāthas.

The hymn concentrates on Indra as the helper of his praisers in contests and in battles. He is exhorted to come to our aid, to provide us with protection, to bring

us the power inhering in rival peoples (see especially vss. 7–8), and to help us defeat our foes. The hymn is without major complications, and the theme is more repeated than developed. This regular repetition gives the hymn an unhurried pace, which contrasts with the urgency of the contests and battles described. This pace begins to quicken in the last verses: the repeated phrase introducing an imperative, "So then, as ever" (vss. 10, 11, 12), seems to be building to a finale. But the last pragātha (vss. 13–14), rather than providing the expected climactic plea to Indra for aid that would end the hymn conventionally, is instead a two-verse subordinate clause about Indra and his racing horses that utterly lacks a main clause, and it displays a density of imagery, with unrelated similes piled up pell-mell, that seems designed to replicate the breathless pace of a real contest—a remarkable effect. At the same time, it harkens back to the beginning of the hymn, with its mention of steeds and the racecourse (see vs. 1) and the "great stakes" (see vs. 4), so that the apparently reckless speed and lack of completion of the final two verses is contained within a ring-compositional structure.

1. Because it is just you that we bards call upon at the winning of the prize,
you, Indra, as master of settlements that our men (call upon) amid obstacles, you at the finish lines of our steed,
2. So you—o dazzling one with mace in hand, o possessor of the stone, being praised as the great one—boldly
heap up for us cow, horse, and chariotry altogether like a prize for the winner, o Indra.

3. The unbounded one who smites altogether, that Indra do we call upon.
O you possessing a thousand testicles, of powerful manliness, master of settlements—be there to strengthen us in the combats.
4. Like a bull, you press the peoples hard with your battle fury at the spirited competition, o you who are equal to song.
Become our helper at the (contest for) great stakes, at (the contest for) our bodies, the waters, and the sun.

5. Indra, bring us the best, the mightiest, fulfilling fame,
with which you, o dazzling one with mace in hand, fill both these world-halves, o you of good lips.
6. It is you, the mighty conqueror of the bordered domains, that we call upon to help, o king among the gods.
Make all our things that waver gain foothold and our foes be easily conquered, o good one.

7. The might and manliness that are in the Nahuṣa territories, Indra,
or the brilliance that belongs to the five settlements—bring them here: all the masculine powers altogether.

8. Or what bullish power is in Tṛkṣi and in the Druhyu people, or whatever is in the Pūru, o bounteous one,
grant that to us fully at (the time of) the conquering of men, for us to vanquish our foes in battles.

9. O Indra, your threefold, triple-armored shelter that provides well-being—
that protection hold out to our benefactors and to me. Keep the arrow away from those
10. Who, with their mind set on cattle, outwit their rival and smite him boldly.
So then, as ever, o bounteous Indra longing for songs, as the protector of our bodies, come up close to us.

11. So then, as ever, be there to strengthen us. Indra, help our leader in the fight,
when the feathered, sharp-headed arrows fly in the midspace,
12. Where champions stretch wide their own dear bodies as shelter for their ancestors.
So then, as ever, hold out protection to our body and lineage. Keep away unforeseen hatred.

13. When, Indra, at the charge, you will spur on your steeds at the (contest for) great stakes,
on an uncrowded (race)course, on its twisting path, like falcons hunting fame,
14. (The steeds) going swiftly like rivers in a torrent when (the chariot?) has sounded following their roar,
who, like birds over raw flesh, keep circling (the racecourse), being held firm in the cow [=leather (reins)] in your two arms…

VI.47 (488) Soma, Indra, etc.

Garga Bhāradvāja
31 verses: triṣṭubh, except bṛhatī 19, anuṣṭubh 23, gāyatrī 24, dvipadā 25, jagatī 27

Like III.53, the family hymn of the Viśvāmitras, dedicated primarily to Indra and placed at the end of the Indra cycle in Maṇḍala III, this hymn is the family hymn of the Bharadvājas, dedicated primarily to Indra and also positioned at the end of the Indra cycle in its maṇḍala. Also like III.53, VI.47 consists of a number of smaller units, some of which seem to have little or no connection with each other. Different scholars have suggested different divisions of the hymn; our own is based in great part on arguments based on rhetoric.

It begins with an extravagant praise of soma (vss. 1–5), rhetorically unified by the oft-repeated pronoun "this one here" (*ayám*), which in several of its occurrences takes an unusual final position (as opposed to its standard initial slot). With the presence of soma unquestionably established, Indra is then invited to drink it in the following verse (6), with the ritual context explicitly identified as the Midday Pressing. In fact already toward the end of the soma verses, there has been a modulation toward Indra: several of the deeds attributed to "this one here" are more Indraic than Somian, especially the propping of heaven in 5cd, and the final words of verse 5 "the bull accompanied by the Maruts" would ordinarily uniquely identify Indra, who is addressed in the next pāda (6a).

The extended middle section of the hymn (vss. 7–21) is entirely devoted to Indra. Verses 7–10 contain a series of direct pleas, for Indra to lead us forward to wider space and a better life and to provide refreshment and a good life. The next three verses (11–13) are similarly general, but couched in the 3rd person. (Two of these verses [12–13] are repeated in a very late hymn, X.131.6–7, and in turn are used in the later Sautrāmaṇī ritual, but we see no direct evidence of that ritual here.) Indra appears in these verses as a sort of universal protector and helper. This characterization seems to raise questions in the poet's mind: if Indra is the protector of all, then how does any particular group get ahead?

This implicit question prompts the next, somewhat jarring, section of the hymn (vss. 14–19), which concerns the fickle and unpredictable way in which Indra's patronage flits from one man to another. The section begins undramatically by announcing the many verbal and ritual offerings to Indra, coming (it seems) from many different groups (vs. 14), all seeking his aid. The next verse (15) seems to treat Indra's capriciousness as a positive trait: he doesn't only and always aid the strong, but will frequently promote a man who has fallen behind. The next two verses (16–17) continue this theme, but with Indra's behavior appearing in a darker light, as he arbitrarily breaks his agreements and betrays his followers. In the following verse (18) Indra is infinitely multiplied, presenting a different appearance to each different group and seemingly possessed of a thousand horses, each pair of which might take him to a different group pleading for his aid. This somewhat disturbing section is brought to a happy end in verse 19: only one pair of horses is yoked (to bring Indra to us?), the various forms are under Tvaṣṭar's control, and in the rhetorical question that forms the second half-verse (matching the question in vs. 15) it is concluded that Indra is unlikely to stay with the enemy when our own patrons are now providing such a good sacrifice. One of the most notable aspects of this little section (esp. vss. 15–18) about Indra's constantly changing behavior is its grammatical reflection: these verses are packed with *āmreḍita* nominal compounds "each x, x after x" and so-called "intensive" verb forms (really iterative-frequentative, meaning "keeps x-ing, continually x-es"), forms that are relatively marked in the Vedic grammatical system. The presence of four āmreḍitas and four intensives in four verses both calls attention to the message and reflects it by portraying a regularly alternating set of actions and objects.

The reassurance of verse 19 has come none too soon, for in verse 20 the poet and his group find themselves in a bad spot, not the wide and bountiful place they prayed Indra to lead them to in verses 7–8. In verse 21 the opposing forces are overcome (by Indra, it seems, though he is unnamed). Thus, verses 7–8 and 20–21 form a larger ring around the Indra section.

A dānastuti follows (vss. 22–25), in which the victorious kings distribute the bounty won in the battle referred to in verse 21. The dānastuti proceeds briskly and efficiently, without any of the jocularity commonly found in dānastutis elsewhere, just a list of the acquisitions.

The last part of the hymn (vss. 26–31) is the strangest. It consists of three verses (26–28) addressed to the war chariot and three (29–31) addressed to the war drum. These verses are also found in the Atharvaveda (VI.125–126). Each of these martial objects is praised in the most extravagant terms and compared with the attributes of the gods. Although this section seems to have no direct connection with the rest of the hymn, it may have been attached to the hymn (or even originally composed as part of it) in response to the battle depicted in verses 20–21 and the distribution of booty in verses 22–25. Chariots are part of the gift (24a), and it would not be surprising that a war drum might be allotted as part of the post-battle distribution. It is also worth remembering that in III.53, the family hymn of the Viśvāmitras mentioned above, one of the final sections (vss. 17–20) is devoted to the possible perils besetting a chariot and its team, with phraseology similar to verses 26–28 in this hymn.

1. Sweet is this one, certainly, and it is honeyed; sharp is this one, certainly, and it is full of sap.
   And now that Indra has drunk of it, no one at all overcomes him at the challenges.
2. This sweet one here was the most exhilarating, on which Indra became exhilarated for the smashing of Vṛtra,
   he who (having performed) many exploits smashed apart the nine and ninety walls of Śambara.
3. This one, when it is drunk, rouses my speech; it has awakened an eager inspired thought.
   This wise one measured out the six broad (realms), from which no world is at a distance.
4. This is the one who created the expanse of the earth; who created the height of heaven is this one here;
   this one (created) the beestings on the three slopes [=worlds?]. Soma upheld the broad midspace.
5. This one found the flood with its brilliant appearance at the (fore)front of the dawns with their gleaming seats.
   This one, great, with a great pillar propped up heaven—he, the bull, accompanied by the Maruts.

6. Boldly drink the soma in the tub, Indra—as smasher of Vṛtra at the confluence of goods, o champion.
At the Midday Pressing, drench yourself. Standing amid wealth, establish wealth in us.
7. Indra, look forward for us, like the man who goes ahead; lead us further forward, toward a better state.
Become one of good passage, who gives us passage beyond; become one of good guidance and valued guidance.
8. Lead us along to a wide world, as the one who knows—to sun-filled light, to fearlessness, to well-being.
High are the arms of you who are stalwart, Indra. Might we approach these two lofty shelters.
9. Place us in the widest chariot box, Indra, on the two best-pulling horses, you possessor of hundreds.
Convey hither the highest refreshment of refreshments. Let our (refreshment) not cross over to the "riches of the stranger," bounteous one.
10. Indra, be gracious. Seek a means of life for me. Spur on my poetic vision like a blade of copper.
Whatever I say here in devotion to you, just this enjoy. Make me accompanied by the gods.
11. Indra the protector, Indra the helper, Indra the champion good to call at every call—
I call on Indra, the able one, called on by many. Let bounteous Indra establish well-being for us.
12. Let Indra be of good protection, of good help with his help, very gracious, affording all possessions.
Let him thrust away hatred; let him create fearlessness. Might we be lords of good heroes in abundance.
13. Might we be in the favor of him who deserves the sacrifice, in his propitious benevolence.
Let Indra of good protection, of good help to us keep hatred away even from a distance.
14. Down to you, Indra, run the hymns and the sacred formulations as teams, like a wave along the slopes.
As broad as your bounty are the many pressings. You join together the waters, the cows, and the drops, you possessor of the mace.
15. Who will praise him, who will fill him, who will sacrifice to him, if the bounteous one would always help only the strong?
Like one who puts down his two feet one after the other, with his powers he makes the one who was behind to be in front.
16. He is famed as a hero who subdues every strong one, continually leading the one beyond the other in turn.

Hating the flashy, king of both (races [=human and divine]), Indra keeps prodding the clans, the sons of Manu—first one, then the other.
17. He twists away from his partnerships with those in front; continually double-crossing them, he goes with those behind.
Indra keeps enduring through the many autumns, shaking them [=autumns] off so they don't close in.
18. He has a form corresponding to every form; this form of his is for display.
Indra keeps going about in many forms through his magical powers, for ten hundred fallow bays are yoked for him.
19. Having yoked the two fallow bay mares to his chariot, Tvaṣṭar rules over the many (forms) here.
Who will always sit on the side of the hostile—and especially when (our) patrons are sitting (a sacrificial session)?
20. We have come here to a field without pasturage, o gods. Though it was wide, the land has become narrow.
O Bṛhaspati, o Indra, be on the lookout for a path for the singer who is in this state on his quest for cattle.
21. Day after day he drove off from their seat the other half, the black kindred all of the same appearance.
The bull smashed the two Dāsas, mercenaries, Varcin and Śambara, at the moated place.

22. Prastoka from your bounty, Indra, has just now given ten casks, ten prizewinners.
From Divodāsa, (son?) of Atithigva, we have accepted as bounty the goods belonging to Śambara.
23. Ten horses, ten casks, ten garments, with delights on top—
ten golden balls have I gained from Divodāsa.
24. Ten chariots with side-horses, a hundred cows
has Aśvatha given to the Atharvans, to Pāyu.
25. The descendant of Sṛñjaya has reached toward the Bharadvājas, who have acquired great bounty belonging to all people.

26. O tree, because you should become firm-limbed, a comrade to us, furthering (us), affording good heroes,
you are knotted together with cows [=leather (straps)]. Be firm! Let the one who mounts you win what is to be won.
27. Strength has been brought up from heaven, from earth; might has been brought here from the trees.
To the strongness of the waters enclosed by cows, to the mace of Indra—to the Chariot—sacrifice with an oblation.

28. The mace of Indra, the face of the Maruts, the embryo of Mitra, the navel of Varuṇa—
taking pleasure in this oblation-giving of ours, god Chariot, accept our oblations.
29. Make Heaven and Earth gasp. Let the moving (world [=living creatures]) dispersed in many places pay attention to you.
O Drum, along with Indra, with the gods, drive away the rivals farther than far.
30. Roar out your power. Set strength in us. Thunder down, thrusting away difficulties.
Blast away misfortunes from here, o Drum. You are the fist of Indra: be firm!
31. Drive those yonder [=cows] hither and make the ones here turn back. The Drum keeps speaking, giving the signal.
Our men, with horses as their wings, are converging: (so) let our charioteers win, o Indra.

VI.48 (489) Agni (1–10), Maruts (11–12, 20–21), Maruts or Liṅgoktadevatās (13–15), Pūṣan (16–19), Maruts or Heaven and Earth or Pṛśni (22)

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
22 verses: various lyric meters, arranged for the most part in pragāthas

Another curious hymn, made up of apparently disparate sections and composed in a variety of different lyric meters. The headnote above reproduces the dedicands suggested by the Anukramaṇī, but they do not exactly fit the contents of the hymn. The first ten verses, dedicated to Agni, seem a conventional Agni hymn, the curiosity being that it is not placed among the other Agni hymns. It is also metrically the most stable portion of the hymn, with paired pragātha verses alternating bṛhatī and satobṛhatī, save for verses 6–8, where each verse has an extra eight-syllable pāda at the end.

The next three verses (11–13) offer an odd interlude: the priestly associates of the poet are ordered to drive a cow nearby, who will give milk for the Maruts. Although the Anukramaṇī identifies the Maruts as the dedicands of these verses, they seem incidental. The focus is on the cow—whether as a metaphor for Bharadvāja's poetic inspiration, as a real cow meant to provide the milk to mix with soma in the ongoing sacrifice, or as both. This cow is reminiscent of the apparent cow in the extremely enigmatic verses of the Viśvāmitra family hymn (III.53.15–16), a hymn that occupies a similar place in its maṇḍala.

Pūṣan is the subject of verses 14–19, the heart of the hymn. As Geldner points out, the Bharadvājas have a special relationship with Pūṣan: Maṇḍala VI contains the only series of hymns devoted to that god (VI.53–58). The first two verses of this section (14–15) present a solemn, formal praise of Pūṣan, who is compared to the great Vedic gods in his various qualities, despite his usual rustic and relatively lowly status. The two verses clearly form a pragātha, though the second of them (vs. 15) has five pādas (12 12 12 8 8) rather than the expected satobṛhatī (12 8 12 8). After these two straightforward verses, notable only for the hyperbolic encomium of this minor divinity, there follow three verses (16–18) containing a remarkable, intimate address to Pūṣan, whispered into his ear (see 16ab), some of which, especially verse 17, is close to unintelligible. The translation of that verse given here is extremely provisional; what is clear is that the style and syntax are informal, and the poet probably uses idioms and popular sayings current in colloquial speech. Moreover, since it is whispered to Pūṣan, it *should* be unintelligible to us. The final verse devoted to Pūṣan (19), though it remains a 2nd-person address, returns to the high, formal style of the first two (14–15) and is in bṛhatī. It should be noted that the three intimate verses have the same metrical structure as the three verses about the cow (11–13) and share with those verses a certain idiomatic register. Each consists of a sequence of kakubh (8 12 8: vss. 11, 16), satobṛhatī (12 8 12 8: vss. 12, 17), and puraüṣṇih (12 8 8: vss. 13, 18).

The final three verses (20–22) are dedicated to the Maruts. The first two form another pragātha (20 in the expected bṛhatī, 22 with an extra eight-syllable pāda at the end, like the extended satobṛhatīs of vss. 6 and 8), while the final verse (22) is in anuṣṭubh. The reason for their position here is unclear. The final verse is enigmatic, as verses referring the Maruts' mother Pṛśni and their birth often are (cf. II.34.2 and especially nearby VI.66.1), and the hymn, having presented us with a number of puzzles along the way, ends with a final one.

1. With your every sacrifice to Agni, and with your every hymn to his skill, we—that is, I—have proclaimed time after time the immortal Jātavedas, dear like an ally.
2. The child of nourishment—because he is inclined toward us, that one all on his own—we would ritually serve, for the bestowal of oblations.
He will become our helper in the prize-contests; he will become the strengthener and protector of our bodies.
3. Because, Agni, as a great unaging bull, you radiate widely with your beam,
constantly flaming up with your untiring flame, o flame-bright one, shine bright with your bright lights.
4. You sacrifice to the great gods: sacrifice in due order with your resolve and wondrous power.
Bring them nearby for help, Agni. Bestow prizes and win them.
5. Whom the waters, the stones, and the trees carry to term as the embryo of truth,

who is born, when he is churned mightily by men, on the back of the earth,

6. Who has filled both world-halves with his radiance, he races to heaven with his smoke;
he is seen across the darkness in the nights, a ruddy bull among the dusky ones,
a ruddy bull toward the dusky ones.

7. With your lofty beams, o Agni—with your flaming flame, o god,
when kindled at Bharadvāja's, o youngest one, richly light up for us, o flaming one,
brilliantly light up, o pure one.

8. You are houselord of all the clans stemming from Manu, o Agni.
With your hundred strongholds, o youngest one, protect your kindler from narrow straits for a hundred winters,
and protect those who give to your praisers.

9. You good one, conspicuous by your help, impel bounties to us.
Of this wealth here you are the charioteer, Agni. Find a ford for our progeny.

10. Deliver our progeny and posterity to the further shore, with deliverers who are undeceivable and not absent-minded.
O Agni, keep godly rages away from us and ungodly tangles.

11. Comrades, drive near a juice-yielding milk-cow with your newer speech.
Send one who doesn't kick—

12. Who will milk out undying fame for the self-radiant troop of Maruts,
who is in the grace of the precipitous Maruts, who goes her own way with benevolent thoughts.

13. For Bharadvāja, once again, milk both a milk-cow yielding all milk and refreshment yielding all nourishment.

14. Strong-willed like Indra, master of artifice like Varuṇa,
gladdening and yielding lush nourishment like Aryaman, just like Viṣṇu—that one will I praise for you, to mark him out—

15. Turbulent like the troop of Maruts, powerfully noisy, without assailant—Pūṣan (I praise), so that hundreds,
thousands (of goods) he will heap together from the settled domains.
He will make the hidden goods visible; he will make goods easy for us to find.

16. Run up to me, Pūṣan. I will announce close to your ear, o glowing one:
"Evil are the hostilities of the stranger.

17. "Don't tear out the Kākambīra tree—pursue the taunts and make them disappear!

And certainly don't (tear off the wheel) of the sun: for thus never could you give pursuit to the one who 'puts the necks' (of the horses to the chariot-pole?).

18. "Let (us) have a partnership that keeps the wolf away, with you who are like a leather bag—
an unsplit one that holds curds, a well-filled one that holds curds."

19. For you are beyond mortals and equal with the gods in your splendor.
Keep an eye on us in our battles, Pūṣan. Help us now, just as before.

20. O you shakers, let (us) have the valuable guidance of a valuable one and let there be the liberal spirit
either of a god or of a mortal who has sacrificed, o Maruts who receive the forefront of the sacrifice.

21. He whose acclaim goes around heaven even in a single day, like the god Sun,
the Maruts assume his vibrant power, his sacrificial name—his Vṛtra-smashing power, his preeminent Vṛtra-smashing power.

22. Only once was Heaven born; only once was Earth born.
Only once was the milk of Pṛśni milked. Another (of the Maruts) is not born after this.

VI.49 (490) All Gods

Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 15

A hymn of straightforward structure, typical of many All God hymns: each verse praises a single god (or divine entity, like the pair Night and Dawn [vs. 3] or the group of Maruts [vs. 11]). Most verses name the god in question, though the name can be postponed till late in the verse, as in verse 2 dedicated to Agni or verse 8 to Pūṣan, whose name is the last word in the verse. Two do not name the god at all: verse 3 to Night and Dawn and verse 12 to Indra. The riddling technique of postponing or omitting the name of an entity defined by the verse is of course common in Ṛgvedic rhetoric, and its use in All God catalogues is especially appropriate.

There is no obvious ritual or other significance to the order of gods in this hymn, though many of the parties to the Morning Pressing occur early in the hymn: Agni (vs. 2), Night and Dawn (vs. 3), Vāyu (vs. 4), Aśvins (vs. 5). On the other hand, the verse dedicated to Indra (12), a regular participant in the dawn ritual, is late in the hymn, though he is obliquely present, with the Maruts, in 6cd. No god receives more than a single verse, though, as just mentioned, Indra and the Maruts have a presence in the Parjanya and Vāta [=Thunder and Wind] verse (6), as Agni does

in the Mitra and Varuṇa verse (1) and in the Tvaṣṭar verse (9). The reference shifts between the 3rd and 2nd person, with the former predominating. The final verse of the hymn, in a slightly different meter (triṣṭubh but with an extra pāda), mentions no specific gods, but asks all of them for benefits.

1. I will praise the people of good commandment with newer hymns, will praise Mitra and Varuṇa the gracious.
   Let them come hither; let them listen here—those of good dominion, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni.
2. The one to be reverently invoked at the ceremonies of every clan, of undistracted resolve, the spoked wheel of the two youthful ones [=Heaven and Earth],
   the child of Heaven, the son of strength—Agni—the ruddy beacon of the sacrifice (I invoke) to perform sacrifice.
3. The two daughters of the ruddy one, differing in form: the one is ornamented with stars, the other is the sun's.
   The two pure ones, transiting alternately, wandering apart—being hymned they both approach the prayerful thought once it is heard.
4. A lofty inspired thought (goes) forth to Vāyu, who, possessing lofty wealth and all valuables, fills the chariot.
   Having a brilliant course, master of teams, as poet you seek to reach the poet, you who are worshiped at the forefront of the sacrifice.
5. That seems to me a wonder—the chariot of the Aśvins, radiant, yoked with mind,
   by which you two, Nāsatyas, superior men, drive your circuit, for our descendants and ourselves to prosper.
6. Parjanya [/Thunder] and Vāta [/Wind], you two bulls of the earth, quicken the watery outpourings (for him [=human poet])
   through whose hymns—you poets who really hear [=Maruts] and you mounter of the moving world [=Indra]—you made the moving world your own.
7. The daughter of Pavīru, the maiden with a brilliant lifespan, Sarasvatī, whose husband is a hero, will confer poetic insight.
   Together with the (divine) ladies she will hold out to the singer unbroken shelter, protection difficult to assail.
8. I will direct my eloquence to the complete protector of every path. Prompted by desire, he has attained the chant.
   He will bestow on us proliferating riches tipped with gold; he will cause every visionary thought to reach its goal—Pūṣan.
9. To him who receives the first portion, the glorious conferrer of vigor, the skillful god with lovely palms and lovely hands
   who deserves the sacrifice of the dwelling places—to Tvaṣṭar easy to invoke will far-radiant Agni, the Hotar, sacrifice.

10. The father of creation: with these hymns strengthen Rudra by day, Rudra by night;
    the lofty, high, ageless, very gracious one would we invoke separately, roused by the poet.
11. You youths, poets deserving the sacrifice, you Maruts—come hither in response to the singer's longing for space,
    for you in your strength quicken even (a place) without brightness, approaching in just the same way as to Aṅgiras, you superior men.
12. Forth to the hero, forth to the powerful, precipitous one will I drive (praise?), as a guardian of livestock drives his flocks home.
    He will make the inspired words of the speaker touch the body of him who is famed, as one makes the firmament touched by stars.
13. He who measured out the earthly realms three times exactly, for Manu, who was hard-pressed—Viṣṇu—
    in this shelter of yours (still) being offered might we rejoice with wealth, with life and lineage.
14. Let Ahi Budhnya take delight in this (praise?) of ours, along with the waters and the chants; in this let the Mountain, in this let Savitar take delight;
    let the Gift-Escorts, let Fortune, let Plenitude quicken this along with the plants, for wealth.
15. Now to us give wealth in chariots, filling the settled domains, consisting of many heroes, the herdsmen of great truth;
    give ageless peaceful dwelling (and that) with which we will trample upon the (other) peoples, the godless contenders,
    with which we will take on the godless clans.

VI.50 (491) All Gods

Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
15 verses: triṣṭubh

Unlike the last hymn, with its tidy organization allotting one verse per god, this All God hymn casts a wider and more inclusive net with multiple gods sometimes mixed in a single verse, some gods given more than one verse (Maruts, vss. 4–5), and marginally divinized figures, like the Waters (vs. 7), also addressed. The first verse establishes this messy inclusiveness, calling on Aditi, the three principal Ādityas (Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman), Agni, Savitar, Bhaga, and the "rescuer gods," who may, but need not be, the Maruts. The hymn also has a more direct and intimate feel than VI.49: although both hymns mix 2nd-person and 3rd-person reference to the gods, in VI.50 the 2nd person predominates, in contrast to VI.49, and the 2nd-person invocations in VI.50 more often contain

imperatives and requests in the optative, in contrast to the generally descriptive clauses of VI.49.

Another noteworthy feature is the relative prominence of female divinities. Again, the first verse sets the scene by placing Aditi first. Besides Earth, in the pair Heaven and Earth (vs. 3), we find Rodasī (vs. 5), the motherly Waters (vs. 7), Sarasvatī (vs. 12), the Wives of the Gods, associated with Tvaṣṭar (vs. 13), and Earth again (vss. 13–14). The divine ladies end the hymn (vs. 15).

1. I call upon goddess Aditi for you with reverences, on Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, for mercy,
   on Aryaman the very well-disposed, who gives without being begged, on the rescuer gods, on Savitar and Bhaga.
2. O very great Sun, pursue the gods of good light whose father is skill, in (witness to our) blamelessness—
   they who have two births, the trusty ones who serve the truth, sunlit, worthy of worship, having Agni as their tongue.
3. And, Heaven and Earth, you two very gracious world-halves—you will make broad, lofty dominion as shelter
   great(ly), so that there will be a faultless wide realm for our peaceful dwelling, you two Holy Places.
4. Let the sons of Rudra incline themselves to us here, the unassailable good ones invoked today,
   since we, placed in petty or in great distress, have called upon the Maruts, the gods—
5. The ones to whom the goddess Rodasī is joined, on whom Pūṣan attends, sharing the sacrifice by halves.
   O Maruts, when, on having heard our call, you make your drive, the worlds tremble at your agitated course.
6. Chant to this hero who has a yearning for songs—to Indra with a new sacred formulation, o singer.
   He will hear the call. While being praised and being greatly hymned, he will give rewards.
7. O Waters belonging to Manu, establish unimpaired succor as luck and lifetime for our offspring and descendants.
   For you are the most motherly healers, the begetters of everything still and moving.
8. God Savitar, who gives protection, should come hither to us—the golden-palmed one deserving the sacrifice,
   who, rich in gifts, like the face of Dawn discloses valuables to the pious.
9. And you, Son of Strength—you should turn the gods hither to us today to this ceremony here.
   Might I be always within (the sphere of) your giving; by your help might I possess good heroes, Agni.

10. And you Nāsatyas should come here to my summons with your insightful thoughts—you certainly are inspired poets.
    (As you did) Atri from great darkness, release (me)—triumph, men!—from difficulty at close quarters.
11. Become for us givers of wealth that is brilliant, rich in prizes, in men, in much livestock.
    Showing favor, o gods—the heavenly, earthly, cow-born, and watery ones—be merciful.
12. Let those who grant rewards be merciful to us in concord—Rudra and Sarasvatī, Viṣṇu, Vāyu,
    the Master of the Ṛbhus, Vāja, the divine Distributor. Let Parjanya [/Thunder] and Vāta [/Wind] swell refreshments for us.
13. And this god Savitar and Bhaga and the Child of the Waters—let (each) help us, supplying gifts,
    and Tvaṣṭar jointly with the divine ones, the Wives, Heaven with the gods, Earth with the seas.
14. And let Ahi Budhnya hear us and Aja Ekapad, Earth, Sea,
    and all the gods, strong through truth, when they are invoked and praised. Let the solemn utterances, pronounced by poets, help (us).
15. In just this way the Bharadvājas, the descendants of me, this Mamata, chant with their insightful thoughts, with their chants.
    The (divine) ladies, the unassailable good ones who are offered to—all of you be praised, you who deserve the sacrifice.

VI.51 (492) All Gods

Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
16 verses: triṣṭubh 1–12, uṣṇih 13–15, anuṣṭubh 16

This sixteen-verse hymn falls metrically into three quite unequal portions: 1–12, 13–15, and 16. On the basis of both structure and content, it appears that these were originally at least two separate hymns. Verses 1–12 are unitary in tone, and the central, responsive verses 6–7 can be interpreted as an omphalos, supported by various lexical rings. (Oldenberg [1888: 199–200], however, divides these twelve verses into four tṛca hymns.)

The hymn so defined differs markedly from the last two All God hymns (VI.49–50), which catalogue a series of gods and their attributes in an unordered list. This hymn, in contrast, is highly reminiscent of the Mitra, Varuṇa, and Sūrya hymns in Maṇḍala VII (VII.60–63), in which the Sun surveys the human world and bears witness to Mitra and Varuṇa about the innocence and guilt of men. Like those hymns, this begins with the rising of the sun (vss. 1–2); it then turns to praise of the Ādityas. The emphasis is on their truth and lack of deceit—Ādityan preoccupations.

The omphalos verses (6–7), marked by initial repeated *mā́* "don't!," beg the gods not to subject us to undeserved punishment, thus implicitly claiming our innocence, which should be visible to the all-seeing Sun (though the final pāda of the following vs. 8 seems to allow the possibility of a modicum of guilt). The remaining five verses (8–12) return to the theme of the truthful gods, with somewhat more insistent prayers for grace and help. Toward the end, in verse 11, a larger group of gods is named: invocations of additional gods at the end of a hymn are very common. The last verse (12), naming the priestly family and summarizing the content and intent of the hymn that precedes it, is a typical final verse.

The remaining verses (13–16) may have been appended to this hymn because they chiefly concern various malefactors whom we wish to banish or destroy, including the cheat (*ripú*, vs. 13) and the (clearly human) "wolf" (*vṛ́ka*, vs. 14), both of which were also mentioned as dangers in the omphalos verses ("cheat" vs. 7, "wolf" vs. 6).

1. Up goes this great eye of Mitra and of Varuṇa—dear and undeceivable.
   The blazing, sightly face of truth has flashed forth on its rising like the bright ornament of heaven.
2. The inspired poet who knows their three divisions and the breeds of the gods far away and here,
   who sees the straight and the crooked among mortals, the Sun looks upon the ways of the stranger.
3. I will praise you, the great herdsmen of truth: Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa, the well-born ones.
   Aryaman, Bhaga, those of undeceivable inspired thoughts, the pure companions, do I call here.
4. Those who care for the stranger, the lords of settlements, undeceivable, the great kings, givers of good dwelling,
   the youths of good rule ruling over Heaven, the superior men—the Ādityas I beseech and Aditi, in quest of friendship.
5. O Father Heaven, Mother Earth lacking the lie, Brother Agni, good ones—have mercy on us.
   All you Ādityas and Aditi jointly—spread out ample shelter for us.
6. Don't make us subject to the wolf, to the she-wolf, to any at all who wishes us ill, o you who deserve the sacrifice,
   for you are the charioteers of our bodies and you have become (the charioteers) of (our?) skillful speech.
7. Don't let us pay for the offense done to you by another; don't let us do that which you avenge, o good ones,
   for you rule over all, All Gods. Let the cheat harm his own body.
8. Reverence is powerful. I seek to attract reverence here. Reverence upholds heaven and earth.
   Reverence to the gods; reverence is master of them. With reverence I seek to redeem even an offense committed.

9. You charioteers of truth who possess refined skill, settled in the dwelling places of truth, undeceivable,
   all you great superior men of broad gaze do I bend here with reverences, o you who deserve the sacrifice.
10. For they possess the best luster and they lead us across all difficulties—those of good rule, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, whose inspired thoughts are truth, who are in reality rulers of speech.
11. They strengthen our earthly realm—Indra, Earth, Pūṣan, Bhaga, Aditi, the Five Peoples.
    Affording good shelter, good help, good guidance, let them be good herdsmen for us, offering us good protection.
12. To attain the one whose seat is in heaven, o gods, the Hotar of the Bhāradvājas now begs for favor.
    Sacrificing with the ritual meals set here, desiring goods, he has extolled the breeds of the gods.

13. Away with this crooked, cheating, ill-intentioned thief, o Agni.
    Make an easy passage for him far, far away, o lord of settlements.
14. Surely our pressing stones have bellowed for your companionship, Soma.
    Smash down the rapacious niggard. For he is a wolf!
15. Because you of good drops, with Indra preeminent, are heaven-bound, make good passage for us on the road. (Be) herdsmen at home.
16. We have gone on the faultless path leading to well-being, on which one avoids all hatreds and finds goods.

VI.52 (493) All Gods

Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
17 verses: triṣṭubh 1–6, gāyatrī 7–12, triṣṭubh 13, jagatī 14, triṣṭubh 15–17, generally arranged in tṛcas

This final, seventeen-verse hymn of the short All God cycle of Maṇḍala VI is metrically and thematically non-unified, and probably consists of originally separate pieces later joined together. (So also Oldenberg 1888: 199–200.) The first twelve verses divide into four tṛcas, the first two in one meter, the second two in another. The first tṛca (vss. 1–3) inveighs against a rival sacrificer and calls on the Maruts and Soma to destroy him, in lively and imaginative terms. In style, though not in meter, it more closely resembles verses 13–15 of the preceding hymn VI.51 than what follows. The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) is more staid, but notable for calling on not only the standard deities but also on natural phenomena for aid. The remainder of the hymn is generic and somewhat repetitive, urging the gods in general to hear our calls and partake of our sacrifice. Relatively few gods are mentioned by name; there

is instead an effort to include all the gods, whatever their current or original location (see esp. vss. 13, 15). After the first two tṛcas, the language is for the most part easy and without much character.

1. Not by Heaven nor by Earth do I concede this, not by my sacrifice and not by these ritual labors.
Let the well-founded mountains crush him. Let the sacrificer of an excessive sacrifice be bent double.
2. Whoever disdains us, Maruts, or will scorn our sacred formulation as it is being performed,
let his twisted (ways) be twisting, scorching (flames) for him. Let Heaven blaze at him who hates the formulation.
3. Do they not (call) you, o Soma, the herdsman of the sacred formulation? Do they not call you our protector from taunt?
Do you not see us being scorned? Hurl your scorching lance at the hater of the formulation!

4. Let the dawns help me as they are being born; let the rivers help me as they are swelling.
Let the steadfast mountains help me; let the forefathers help me at the invocation of the gods.
5. Might we always be of good mind; might we look now upon the sun as it rises:
so shall he arrange it—he who is lauded over the gods as goods-lord of goods, as the most welcome arrival because of his help.
6. Indra the most welcome arrival in the nearest nearness because of his help; Sarasvatī swelling with the (other) rivers;
Parjanya—joy itself for us with his plants; Agni good to proclaim, good to call on, like a father.

7. All you gods, come here. Hear this call of mine.
Sit down here on this ritual grass.
8. The one who attends to you with a ghee-backed oblation, o gods—
you all come close to him.
9. Let the sons of the immortal one listen to our hymns.
Let them be very merciful to us.

10. Let all the gods, strong through truth, hearing the calls in their turns, enjoy the associated milk.
11. Let Indra along with his Marut-flock, let Mitra and Aryaman along with Tvaṣṭar,
enjoy the praise song and these oblations of ours.
12. O Agni, Hotar, perform this ceremony as sacrifice for us according to its patterns,
as one who attends to the divine folk.

13. All you gods, hear this call of mine—you who are in the midspace or you who are in heaven,
you who have Agni as your tongue or you who are the means of sacrifice. Having sat on this ritual grass here, bring yourselves to exhilaration.
14. Let all the gods deserving the sacrifice hear me; let both world-halves and the Child of the Waters hear my thought.
Let me not speak speeches to you that can be disregarded. Might we, in nearest contact with you, reach exhilaration just on your favors.
15. Whichever great ones, snake-sly, were born on the earth or in the seat of heaven or of the waters,
let those gods seek a wide place for us to prosper day and night for our whole lifetime.
16. O Agni and Parjanya, help my insightful thought, our lovely praise at this call here, you who are easy to call.
The one begets the refreshing drink, the other the embryo. Confer refreshments accompanied by offspring on us.
17. When the ritual grass has been strewn, when the fire is being kindled, I seek to entice (them) here with a hymn, with great reverence.
At this rite of ours here today, all you gods deserving the sacrifice, bring yourselves to exhilaration on the oblation.

VI.53 (494) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 8

Pūṣan is a favorite minor god of the Bharadvājas: this short Pūṣan sequence (VI.53–58) is the only series of hymns dedicated to Pūṣan in the Ṛgveda. This particular hymn begins with gentle and positive requests of the god (vss. 1–2), but quickly becomes more bloodthirsty, seeking Pūṣan's punishment against stingy patrons. The instruments of punishment are the homely tools of Pūṣan, his awl (vss. 5–8) and goad (vs. 9). Despite the apparent viciousness of the actions urged on Pūṣan, the short lines, repeated phrases, colloquial expressions, and phonetic figures (what is translated anachronistically as "shred them, make them shrapnel" in vss. 7–8 is in Sanskrit the delightful *á rikha kikirá kṛṇu*) give a light texture and playful feeling to the hymn.

1. We have yoked you, o lord of the path—like a chariot for prize-winning—
for poetic vision, o Pūṣan.
2. Lead us toward goods stemming from men, toward a hero who has offered a ritual gift,
toward a houselord of value.

3. Even one who doesn't want to give, o glowing Pūṣan—impel him to give.
   Soften up the mind even of the niggard.
4. Clear out the paths for prize-winning; smash away the negligent.
   Let our poetic visions reach their goal, o strong one.
5. Bore around the hearts of the niggards with an awl, you poet.
   And make them subject to us.
6. Thrust through (them) with an awl, Pūṣan. Seek what is dear to the heart of the niggard.
   And make him subject to us.
7. Shred them, make them shrapnel—the hearts of the niggards, you poet.
   And make them subject to us.
8. The awl that you carry, which impels the sacred formulation, o glowing Pūṣan,
   with it shred the heart of each one, make it shrapnel.
9. Your goad with its cow [=leather] "headband" [=strap] that sends the livestock to their goal, glowing one,
   we implore the favor of this (goad) of yours.
10. And make our poetic vision cow-winning for us, horse-winning, and prize-winning,
    make it manfully to be pursued.

VI.54 (495) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: gāyatrī

Pūṣan is here in his role as protector of livestock and finder of lost things, especially cows.

1. Pūṣan, lead (us) together with one who knows, who will direct (us) aright,
   who will say "just here it is."
2. Might we come together with Pūṣan, who will direct (us) to the houses, and who will say "just here they are."
3. Pūṣan's wheel does not suffer harm, nor does his (wagon's) cask fall down,
   nor his wheel-rim waver.
4. Whoever has done honor to him with an oblation, him Pūṣan does not neglect.
   He is the first to acquire goods.
5. Let Pūṣan follow after the cows for us; let Pūṣan protect the steeds; let Pūṣan win the prize for us.

6. Pūṣan, go forth after the cows of him who sacrifices and presses (soma), and of us who praise (you).
7. Let none disappear; let none be harmed, let none get fractured in a hole.
   But with unharmed (cows) come here.
8. Pūṣan who listens, the take-charge one whose possessions never get lost, him holding sway over wealth do we beseech for wealth.
9. Pūṣan, under your commandment might we never suffer harm.
   We here are your praisers.
10. (Even) from a distance let Pūṣan place his right hand around (us); let him drive our lost (livestock) back to us again.

VI.55 (496) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: gāyatrī

This little hymn is noteworthy for its structure, with a lexical chain knitting the verses together: each verse, except the last (6), contains at least one word or phrase from the preceding verse. The last verse does contain a phonological echo of the preceding one: "brother" in verse 5 (*bhrā́tā*) is echoed by the last word of verse 6 ("bearing" *bíbhrataḥ*).

It is also noteworthy for the startling, but oddly offhand and uncensorious, allusion to incest in verses 4–5, where Pūṣan is identified as the lover of his sister and the wooer of his mother. This follows on three verses (1–3) seeking Pūṣan as charioteer and giver of wealth, and after the incest verses the poet returns to the chariot motif to end the hymn (vs. 6). What the poet is alluding to is Pūṣan's alleged marriage to Sūryā, Daughter of the Sun, glancingly mentioned in nearby VI.58.4 as well as in X.26.6.

1. Come here! Let us two, o child of release, glowing one, together accompany each other.
   Become the charioteer of truth for us.
2. The best charioteer, with braided hair, holding sway over great bounty, the companion of wealth we beseech for wealth.
3. You are a stream of wealth, glowing one, a heap of goods, you with goats as horses,
   the companion of every visionary.
4. Pūṣan who has goats for horses let us now approach with praise—the prizewinner,
   who is said to be the lover of his sister.
5. The wooer of his mother I have spoken to: let the lover of his sister hear us,
   brother of Indra, companion to me.

6. Let the trusty [?] goats draw Pūṣan on his chariot, him who brings (all) to
   readiness *with his sharp (goad),
   they bearing the god.

VI.56 (497) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 6

This hymn has several elements familiar from the previous Pūṣan hymns: he is "the best charioteer" (vs. 2, cf. VI.55.2); he helps the thoughts of poets reach their goal (vs. 4, cf. VI.53.4); he helps us win the prize of cattle (vs. 5, cf. VI.53.4, 10).

There are several novelties in the hymn as well. The hymn begins by naming Pūṣan as "porridge-eater" in an enigmatic construction. Porridge is indeed well known from elsewhere as Pūṣan's characteristic food (see, e.g., VI.57.2 in the next hymn), but is the last phrase of verse 1 an ominous warning, as some have taken it (Pūṣan will be insulted), or a positive indication of Pūṣan's eagerness to respond, as others have (he doesn't need to be invited twice, when porridge is mentioned)? We think that it is neither one; rather, "porridge eater" is such a unique designation for Pūṣan that a poet need provide no further clues to identify him.

In verse 2 Indra appears as Pūṣan's companion; this partnership is further developed in the next hymn, VI.57. The third verse is the most puzzling of the hymn. Nothing further is known about this story—if it is a story—of Pūṣan, the Sun's chariot wheel, and the gray cow, though we suspect that it is connected with the extremely puzzling nearby verse VI.48.17, also of Pūṣan. If so, this associates Pūṣan with Indra in the tearing off of the wheel of the Sun's chariot, a myth found in scattered pieces elsewhere. The "gray cow" may also be a naturalistic reference to a cloudy dawn twilight, with the sun rising through it. Whatever lies behind it, the image is striking.

1. Whoever will designate him, Pūṣan, as "porridge-eater,"
   by him the god (need) not be designated (again).
2. And he is the best charioteer. With him as partner and yokemate, the
   lord of settlements,
   Indra, keeps smashing obstacles.
3. And yonder golden wheel of the Sun
   he set down in the "gray cow"—he the best charioteer.
4. What today we will say to you, much praised wondrous counselor,
   make that thought of ours reach its goal.
5. And make this cow-seeking troop of ours reach its goal for winning.
   From afar, Pūṣan, you are famed.
6. We beg of you well-being that keeps evil afar and goods nearby,
   for wholeness today and for wholeness tomorrow.

VI.57 (498) Indra and Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Indra and Pūṣan are invoked together at the very beginning of this hymn, in a construction (the dual dvandva) that implies habitual intimacy. In the next two verses (2–3) their contrastive attributes are used as definitional descriptors; in verse 2 Indra is the first identified, while in verse 3 the order is the opposite. The end of verse 3 and verse 4 seem to background Pūṣan while foregrounding Indra's great deeds, but the final two verses (5–6) return them to equality, and indeed in both verses Pūṣan is mentioned first, with Indra almost an afterthought. The implied equipoise between the two gods would of course be amusing to a Vedic audience, given the sharp distinction between their importance in the pantheon.

In the translation we have retained as much as possible the order of the elements, even though this violates normal English patterns, because the balance between the two gods and their qualities is conveyed by their careful stationing in the verse.

1. Indra and Pūṣan would we—for partnership, for well-being—
   call upon—for prize-winning.
2. Soma has the one sat down to, to drink it pressed in the two cups.
   Porridge does the other one desire.
3. Goats are the draft-animals for the one; two fallow bay horses, fully
   equipped, are for the other;
   along with those two (horses) he keeps smashing obstacles.
4. When Indra the most bullish led the streams, the great waters,
   then Pūṣan came along.
5. The benevolence of Pūṣan—like the branch of a tree—
   and that of Indra we seize hold of.
6. We ease up on Pūṣan—like a charioteer the reins—
   and Indra, for great well-being.

VI.58 (499) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 2

This last hymn in the Pūṣan cycle in Maṇḍala VI is the only one in trimeter meter, rather than the less formal dimeter. It pictures Pūṣan in a more cosmic context than the previous hymns and ascribes rather more powers to him. The final verse (4), probably with verse 3, refers to the apparent marriage of Pūṣan to Sūryā, daughter of the Sun, a tale alluded to in passing earlier in this cycle.

1. The one of yours is gleaming, the other of yours belongs to the sacrifice: the two day(-halves [=night and day]) of dissimilar form.
   You are like heaven,
   for you give aid to all magical powers, o autonomous one. Let your giving be propitious here, Pūṣan.
2. Having goats as his horses, protecting livestock, granting a house full of prizes, quickening poetic vision, fitted into all creation,
   Pūṣan the god, always brandishing his pliant goad, goes speeding, as he surveys the creatures.
3. The ships of yours that are in the sea, the golden ones that wander in the midspace,
   with these you travel on a mission of the Sun, o you prompted by desire, as you seek fame.
4. Pūṣan has good lineage from Heaven and from Earth, lord of refreshment, bounteous, of wondrous luster,
   whom the gods gave to Sūryā, him prompted by desire, powerful, of lovely outlook.

VI.59 (500) Indra and Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: bṛhatī 1–6, anuṣṭubh 7–10

As has been discussed elsewhere, despite the major roles each of these gods plays in the Ṛgveda, Indra and Agni have little in common ritually or mythologically. Nonetheless, eleven hymns are dedicated jointly to them. In this particular hymn, the pairing is insisted upon: every verse has a form of the dual dvandva compound "Indra-Agni." Moreover, their kinship and joint birth is the subject of the first two verses, which, as many scholars have claimed, may be conceptually connected to the murky hymn X.124, possibly concerning the defeat of the Asuras (the Fathers of vs. 1 in this hymn?) by the Devas or gods. Elsewhere in the Ṛgveda there is no evidence for a family connection between Indra and Agni.

As in some other Indra-Agni hymns, Agni is assimilated to Indra at least in the early verses, since Indra has the more dynamic mythology. The standard promise to Indra to "proclaim (his) manly deeds" is made to Indra and Agni in verse 1; soma is offered to them in verses 1, 3 and 4, though it is really Indra's drink; and they are both said to possess the mace, Indra's weapon, in verse 3. The balance changes somewhat in verses 5–6. The two gods are separated and, though not named, are identified by their characteristics. The second hemistich of 5 refers to Agni alone, and in verse 6, after a reference to Dawn and her cows, probably alluding to the Morning Pressing where Agni is kindled and Indra appears, the second half-verse contrasts Agni (pāda c) and Indra (pāda d).

This brings to an end the first division of the hymn as defined metrically, and this portion forms a satisfactory unit celebrating the gods and offering them praise and soma. The last four verses, also metrically unified, make the singer's requests, for aid against enemies (vss. 7–8) and for wealth (vs. 9), and again invite them with praise and soma (vs. 10). Despite the metrical division, which corresponds to a functional and thematic difference, there is no reason to consider this a composite hymn, *pace* Oldenberg (1888: 200). It conforms to a common pattern: praise and then requests, and the shorter dimeter meter of the last four verses is appropriate to the specific requests, in contrast to the rhetorically more formal praise section in the lyric bṛhatī.

1. I shall now proclaim, when (soma drinks) have been pressed for you, the manly deeds that you two have done.
   Slain are your fathers whose rivals were the gods, but, o Indra and Agni, you are (still) alive.
2. Yes indeed! It is just so: your greatness is most to be marveled at, Indra and Agni.
   Your begetter was the same: you two are brothers, twins (though) with one mother here, one there.
3. The two who are accustomed to the pressed (soma), like a pair of teamed horses to their fodder,
   Indra and Agni, both possessing the mace, the two gods, we call here with their aid.
4. Indra and Agni, whoever will praise you, strong through truth, at these pressings—
   you two will never snap at one who speaks (such) a pleasurable speech, you gods who receive substantial oblations.
5. O gods Indra and Agni, what mortal shall perceive *this one* of you two?
   The single one, (though) having yoked his horses facing in all directions, goes speeding on the same chariot.
6. Indra and Agni, this footless one here [=Dawn] has gone in front of the footed ones [=cows?].
   While (this one [=Agni],) having left his head behind, constantly chattering with his tongue, goes wandering, (this one [=Indra?]) has trodden down thirty with his foot.
7. Indra and Agni, since gallant men are drawing their bows in their arms, do not shun us in this (contest) for great stakes, in our quests for cattle.
8. Indra and Agni, the evil hostilities of the stranger scorch me.
   Make hatreds stay far away from here; keep (him) away from the sun.
9. Indra and Agni, in you are heavenly and earthly goods.
   Extend to us here wealth that brings lifelong prosperity.

10. O Indra and Agni whose conveyance is hymns, who listen to the summons through our praise songs,
through all our songs—come here to drink this soma.

VI.60 (501) Indra and Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
15 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, gāyatrī 4–12, triṣṭubh 13, bṛhatī 14, anuṣṭubh 15, arranged in tṛcas

This Indra-Agni hymn, organized into tṛcas, begins with three verses in trimeter meter notable for the tendency to address Indra and Agni separately, each in the vocative singular, though they receive joint epithets, are referred to by shared pronouns, and are generally, but not exclusively (see vs. 2d), the subjects of dual verbs. Our translation reflects this peculiar disjunction of vocatives. This separate address is not characteristic of the rest of the hymn, where the dual dvandva compound "Indra-Agni" (or, once, a conjoined phrase "Indra and Agni," vs. 12) is found in nine of the remaining twelve verses, and the last tṛca begins with a verse (13) containing four occurrences of the explicit adjective "(you) both" (*ubhā́*).

The content of the praise is generic, with a tendency toward Indraic deeds and qualities (see esp. vss. 3, 6). The second-to-last tṛca treats the two gods separately, without naming them: Agni in verse 10, Indra in verse 11, and a return to joint reference in verse 12. The final triplet (vss. 13–15) is in three different meters, and it has been suggested that it did not originally belong to the rest of the hymn. However, notice that the return to longer lines matches the meter of the first tṛca, and there are also verbal responsions with the first three verses, so that a ring-compositional structure is sketched. The strong emphasis on the unified front presented by the two gods in verses 13–15 contrasts implicitly with the separate address in the first tṛca, and may hint that our own hymn has brought about the close cooperation between the two gods that will benefit us.

1. He pierces the obstacle and wins the prize who will serve Indra and Agni, the mighty ones
who have control over abundant goods, the two most mighty with their might as they seek the victory prize.
2. You two, do battle for cows now, o Indra, for the waters, the sun, and the dawns who were carried (away), o Agni.
The quarters, the sun, the brilliant dawns, o Indra—the waters, the cows, do you, o Agni, as teamster hitch up as your team.
3. O you two obstacle-smashers, with your obstacle-smashing tempests, o Indra, drive our direction, o Agni, by reason of our reverences.
You two, with unstinting, highest bounties, o Indra, be here for us, o Agni.

4. I call upon these two whose every previous deed is admired.
Indra and Agni do not neglect (us).
5. The two strong ones who hew apart the negligent, Indra and Agni, do we call upon.
They will be gracious to such as us.
6. They smash the Ārya obstacles; they smash those of the Dāsa—the two lords of settlements;
they smash away all hatreds.

7. O Indra and Agni, these praises here have roared to you two.
Drink the pressed (soma), you who are luck itself.
8. Those much-sought-after teams of yours which are for the pious, you superior men,
come here with those, o Indra and Agni.
9. With those come here, you superior men, up to this pressing pressed here,
o Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.

10. Reverently invoke him who with his flame embraces all the trees,
who makes them black with his tongue.
11. The mortal who, when (the ritual fire) has been kindled, seeks to win the favor of Indra,
(for him Indra makes) the waters easy to cross for brilliance.
12. You two, deliver to us refreshments accompanied by prizes, and deliver (to safety) swift steeds
to convey Indra and Agni.

13. You both, Indra and Agni, are to be called upon; both together are to invigorate yourselves on bounty.
You both are givers of refreshments, of riches; you both do I call upon to win the victory prize.
14. Come here close to us with bovine and equine goods.
The two partners, the two gods who are luck itself, Indra and Agni, do we call on for partnership.
15. O Indra and Agni, hear the call of the sacrificer who presses (soma).
Pursue his oblations: come here, drink the somian honey.

VI.61 (502) Sarasvatī

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
14 verses: jagatī 1–3, gāyatrī 4–12, jagatī 13, triṣṭubh 14, organized in tṛcas

This hymn has a metrical structure similar to the preceding one, VI.60: it is organized in tṛcas, with the first tṛca (vss. 1–3) in a trimeter meter, the next three tṛcas in

dimeter (4–12), a return to the original meter in verse 13, and, here, a final verse (14) in yet a different meter. The complexity of the meter corresponds roughly with the density of the thought: the first tṛca is rich in imagery and particularities; the following three tṛcas are less adorned and more generic, though Sarasvatī's riverine nature is clear, especially in the second of these tṛcas, verses 7–9. The hymn ends with a final statement of her superiority (vs. 13) and a plea for her aid and sustenance (vs. 14).

The sheer power of the river and the potential menace of her relentless flow are nicely conveyed, especially in the first tṛca, where she punishes a series of human foes and even destroys the mountains while rewarding her praisers. In parts of the hymn, these rewards are clearly related to her identity as river—the streambeds in verse 3, the milk we pray for in verse 14—but in others the connection is not clear, especially the gift to Vadhryaśva of (apparently) a son Divodāsa, which opens the hymns. The hostile Bṛsaya of verse 3 is also unclear: the name occurs only once elsewhere in the Ṛgveda (I.93.4) in similar context.

1. She gave to the pious Vadhryaśva tempestuous Divodāsa who shakes the debtor,
   she who has wrenched away the provender from one niggard after another. These are your powerful gifts, o Sarasvatī.
2. She, like a root-grubbing (boar) with her snortings, broke the back of the mountains with her powerful waves.
   Sarasvatī, who smashes the foreigners, we would entice here for help with well-plaited (hymns), with visionary thoughts.
3. Sarasvatī, tear down the scorners of the gods, the offspring of every tricky Bṛsaya.
   And (while) you found streambeds for the settlements, you flowed poison for *them*, o you rich in prize mares.
4. Let goddess Sarasvatī, rich in prize mares, with her prizes
   help us—the helper of visionary thoughts.
5. Whoever makes appeal to you, goddess Sarasvatī, when the stake is set,
   as if to Indra at the overcoming of Vṛtra,
6. Aid (him), goddess Sarasvatī, at the prize (contests), you prizewinner.
   Channel gain to us, like Pūṣan.
7. And this Sarasvatī, having a golden course, fearsome,
   obstacle-smashing, wants our good praise—
8. Whose boundless, unswerving, turbulent, roving flood,
   her onslaught, proceeds ever roaring.
9. Beyond all hatreds, beyond her other sisters [=rivers] has the truthful one
   extended us, like the sun the days.
10. And she, dear(est) among the dear (rivers), having seven sisters, very delightful—
    Sarasvatī is (ever) worthy of our praise.

11. Having filled the earthly (places), the broad realm, the midspace,
    let Sarasvatī protect (us) from scorn.
12. Having three seats and seven parts, strengthening the five peoples,
    at every prize contest she is worthy to be invoked.
13. The one who by her greatness shines ever more brightly among the great (rivers), (beyond) the others by her brilliance, the busiest of the busy,
    like a chariot lofty and fashioned for wide ranging, she is to be praised by (every) observant one—Sarasvatī.
14. O Sarasvatī, lead us to a better state. Do not spring away with your milk; do not come up short for us.
    Take delight in our partnerships and communities. Let us not go from you to alien dwelling places.

VI.62 (503) Aśvins

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The first five verses of this hymn cover the familiar ground of Aśvin hymns—the poet's eager invitation to the two gods to drive to our sacrifice. Though the theme and sentiments are familiar, there are a number of nice touches—the enjambment across verse boundaries (1/2a; 2bcd/3a, at least in our opinion) and the play on the concepts of newer and older in verses 4–5. This section ends (5d) with the phrase, modifying the Aśvins, "providing bright gifts to the singer" (*gṛṇaté citrárātī*).

The following two verses (6–7) touch on several of the Aśvins' famous deeds, especially the rescue of Bhujyu from the sea (vs. 6), but the two verses after that (8–9) take a detour, addressing other gods and urging them to take violent action against various enemies. The poet seems so agitated that he loses his grip on grammar: verse 9, concerning Mitra and Varuṇa, is syntactically fragmented, shifting without warning or grammatical agreement between dual and singular and between 3rd and 2nd person. (We have not been able to render the full effect in English.)

Though verse 10 returns us to the Aśvins' journey and to a more tranquil grammatical level, it too enlists the Aśvins to attack and also suggests that their journey to us was prompted by the failure of other men. The final verse gives no hint of the agitation in the immediately preceding verses and ends with the same phrase as verse 5, thus implicitly indicating the bipartite structure of the hymn.

1. I shall praise the two outstanding men of this heaven; I call upon the Aśvins, singing [/awakening] with my chants—
   they who, at the breaking of the ruddy dawn, in a single day seek to encompass the ends of the earth and its broad expanses,

2. While striding to the sacrifice with their gleaming (horses). (The horses) have shone the radiant beam of their chariot through the dusky spaces.
   Measuring the many immeasurable expanses, you two drive over the waters, wastelands, and fields,
3. When (you drive) this circuit without slackening, o powerful ones. Over and over you have conveyed insights that are right to the point, with your horses
   swift as thought and vigorous, in order to circumscribe the wayward course of the pious mortal.
4. The two attend upon the thoughts of (me), the newer singer, having harnessed their team,
   conveying beauty and fortifying power, refreshment and nourishment. The age-old Hotar without deceit shall offer sacrifice to the two youths.
5. The two, obliging and skillful, best endowed with many abilities—those age-old ones do I seek to attract here with my newer speech—
   those two who become most wealful for the reciter and praiser, providing bright gifts to the singer.
6. You two with your birds conveyed Bhujyu, the son of Tugra, from the waters, from the sea, through the airy realms,
   through dustless treks, bending (him) away from the lap of the flood with your winged ones.
7. With your victorious (chariot), you charioteers drove through the rock; you harkened to the call of Vadhrīmatī, o bulls.
   Showing favor to Śayu, you made his cow swell. Thus (did you show) your benevolence, you stirring and bustling ones.
8. O world-halves, the anger of gods and among mortals that exists from of old on earth,
   direct that evil heat at the yokemate of demons, o Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudriyas.
9. Which (one of) the two kings, Mitra or Varuṇa, will keep watch over the airy realm, regulating it according to the proper sequence—
   hurl your missile at the deep-embedded demonic power and also at the deceitful speech of the Anu people.
10. With your wheels drawing nearer, with your heaven-bright chariot with its superior men, do you two drive your circuit for our lineage (to prosper),
    because of the distant dereliction of a(nother) mortal. Chop off the heads of the rapacious ones.
11. Drive here with your highest and midmost teams, this way with your lowest.
    Open the doors of the cattle pen, even though they are shut fast, you who provide bright gifts for the singer.

VI.63 (504) Aśvins

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā 11

The first four verses of this hymn are divided more or less equally between the invitation to and journey of the Aśvins to our sacrifice (vss. 1–2) and the sacrifice itself (vss. 3–4). The next two verses (5–6) enter mythological territory: the journey of Sūryā, daughter of the Sun, on the Aśvins' chariot along with them. This mythological journey returns us to the actual journey of today (vs. 7) and the hopes we have of these gods when they attend our sacrifice (vs. 8). The final two verses (9–10) are a dānastuti, naming a number of the patrons of the poet, Bharadvāja, with the single pāda of verse 11 expressing his hope for the Aśvins' favor to both himself and his patrons at the place of sacrifice.

1. Where today did our reverential praise song, like a messenger, find these two obliging ones, called upon by many—
   (the praise song) that has (previously) turned the Nāsatyas this way? For you two will be the dearest in his [=poet's] thought.
2. Come fit for this summons of mine, so that, being hymned, you will drink the stalk.
   You drive, away from harm, around this circuit, which neither a distant one nor one close by may traverse.
3. It has been made for you from the stalk; on the expanse [=ritual ground] has been strewn the ritual grass, offering the easiest approach.
   With hands outstretched, seeking you, I have greeted (you). Approaching you, the stones have anointed you.
4. The fire has stood upright for you at the ceremonies. The gift goes forth, glowing, covered in ghee;
   forth the chosen Hotar whose thought is welcomed, who has yoked the Nāsatyas at his call.
5. For splendor the Daughter of the Sun mounted your chariot provided with hundredfold help, o you who offer much enjoyment.
   You became foremost then in the lineage of those worthy of the sacrifice by your magic powers, o magicians, superior men, dancers.
6. Along with these splendors lovely to see you conveyed the flourishing of Sūryā, for beauty.
   The birds flew forth after you, for wonder; (their) choir reached you (so you became) well-praised, o holy ones.
7. Let the birds, the horses that convey best, convey you to the pleasurable offering, o Nāsatyas.
   Your chariot swift as thought has been sent surging forth after the many refreshments and the fortifying powers that bring refreshment.

8. Because your giving is much, o you who give much enjoyment, swell our cow and our refreshment (so that they) don't dry up.
   To you belong praises and the good praise-hymn and the juices that have followed your gift, o honeyed ones.
9. And mine are two silver, swift (mares) of Puraya, a hundred (cows) at (the hands of) Sumīḷha, and cooked (foods) at (the hands of) Peruka.
   Śāṇḍa has given gold-bedecked (horses) along with their allotted (gear). Ten mated cows are attendant upon the high (horses).
10. Purupanthā has given altogether hundreds and thousands of horses for (my) song for you;
    to Bharadvāja he has given (them) for the song, o hero(es). Demonic powers should be smashed, o you of many wondrous powers.
11. Might I, along with my patrons, be in your favor on the expanse [=ritual ground].

VI.64 (505) Dawn

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with reference to multiple Dawns, but soon (by the second half of vs. 1) focuses only on a single Dawn. As so often, the hymn refers to the present and immediate past when Dawn has just dawned. The standard tropes are present: her wide radiance (vss. 2, 3), her ease of travel (vss. 1, 4), her feminine beauty (vs. 2), her accompanying bovines (vss. 3, 5), and especially her connection with the priestly gift distributed at the early-morning sacrifice and with wealth in general (vss. 1, 4, 5, 6). Although the hymn does not stand out for elaborate rhetorical tricks, it is characterized by pleasing imagery; see especially Dawn as archer and chariot-driver in verse 3 and the morning activities of birds and men in verse 6 (a verse found also at I.124.12).

1. The shining Dawns have arisen for splendor, glistening like the waves of the waters.
   She makes all pathways, all passages easy to travel. She has appeared—the good priestly gift, the bounteous one.
2. Auspicious, you have become visible; you radiate widely. Your flare, your radiant beams have flown up to heaven.
   You reveal your breast as you go in beauty, goddess Dawn, shining with all your might.
3. The ruddy, glistening cows convey her of good portion as she spreads widely.
   Like a champion archer his rivals, she drives away darkness; she repels it like a quick (chariot-)driver.

4. Easy are your pathways, easy your passages (even) in the mountains. (Even) when it is windless you cross over the waters, self-radiant one.
   Convey wealth here for us to prosper, high Daughter of Heaven with your broad course.
5. Convey (it)—you who as the unsurpassable one with your oxen convey the boon at your pleasure, Dawn,
   you who are a goddess, o Daughter of Heaven. Become worthy to be seen with your munificence at the early invocation!
6. The birds have also flown up from their dwelling, and the men who partake of food, at your first flush.
   To the one who is at home you convey much of value, o goddess Dawn, and to the pious mortal.

VI.65 (506) Dawn

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

In virtual mirror-image to the previous hymn, this one begins with a single Dawn, but turns for some verses (2–4) to the plural Dawns, before returning to a single Dawn in the final two verses (5–6). The structure of this hymn is more cunning than the somewhat bland VI.64, however. The poet uses identical pāda openings (4a, 4b, 4c, 5a: *idā́ [hí]* "[for] right now..."), with insistence on the here-and-now, to modulate from the present situation and current poet to the mythological model for the dawn and the associated distribution of treasures, namely the Aṅgirases opening the Vala cave (vs. 5), which is presented as if it were happening now. As often when this myth is mentioned as a model for the singer (see, e.g., V.45), there is no mention of Indra, to whom the leadership in this deed is usually attributed. By the end of verse 5 the mythical and successful Aṅgirases have merged with the current poets, and the invocation of both is proclaimed as having come true. The connection between past and present is continued in the pleas for wealth and fame made in the last verse (6).

1. This very one, the daughter born of heaven dawning for us, has awakened the human settlements,
   she who with her glistening radiance amid the nights has been recognized even across the nocturnal shades of darkness.
2. They have driven through it with their ruddy-yoked horses; brightly shine the Dawns with their gleaming chariots.
   Leading the vanguard of the lofty sacrifice, they thrust aside the darkness of the night.
3. Bringing down to the pious mortal fame, reward, refreshment, nourishment, o Dawns,

1. In that the inspired poet has let flow the triṣṭubh refreshment to you, o Maruts,
you rule [/shine] throughout the mountains.
2. In that you have certainly set your attention on your course, you resplendent ones displaying your power,
the mountains have bent down.
3. They raise themselves upward with the winds—the bellowing ones whose mother is Pṛśni.
They have milked out swelling refreshment.
4. The Maruts scatter mist; they make the mountains tremble,
when they drive their course with the winds,
5. When the mountain peak (holds itself) down for your coursing, and the rivers hold themselves down for your expansion and for your great gusting.
6. You at night we invoke for help, you by day,
you when the ceremony is proceeding.
7. Up they rise, bright with ruddy breath, along their courses,
bellowing on the back of heaven.
8. They release the rein [/ray] with strength, for the sun to travel its path;
they have extended themselves with its radiant beams.
9. This hymn of mine, o Maruts, this praise, o masters of the Ṛbhus,
this invocation of mine—long for it.
10. Three lakes did the dappled ones milk out as honey for the mace-bearer,
a wellspring, a cask full of water.
11. Maruts, when seeking your benevolence we call you from heaven,
then come here to us.
12. For—o Rudras, masters of the Ṛbhus, possessing good drops—in our house
and also in exhilaration you are provident.
13. Wealth, arousing exhilaration, consisting of much livestock, all-nourishing—
impel it here to us from heaven, o Maruts.
14. When, as if on (the byways) of the peaks, you have set your attention on your course, resplendent ones,
you become exhilarated with the drops being pressed [/sounding].
15. A mortal might beg benevolence of them,
even of such an undeceivable (flock), with his prayers.
16. They who, like droplets, blow their blast through the two world-halves along with their rains,
milking the unfailing wellspring,
17. Up they rise with their sounds [/with (the drops) being pressed], up with their chariots, and up with the winds;
up with praises—they whose mother is Pṛśni.

18. With which (aid) you aided Turvaśa and Yadu, with which (you aided) Kaṇva, who gained the stakes,
may we receive (a portion) of this for wealth.
19. O you of good drops, these refreshments here swelling like ghee
will strengthen you, along with the prayers of the descendant of Kaṇva.
20. Where now do you become exhilarated, you of good drops, you for whom the ritual grass has been twisted?
Who is the formulator who serves you?
21. For it is not (now) as it was before, when in return for our praises of you
you used to animate the troops of truth, o you for whom the ritual grass has been twisted.
22. They put together the great waters, together the two "opponents" [=heaven and earth], together the sun,
together the mace, joint by joint.
23. They drove Vṛtra apart, joint by joint, apart the mountains lacking rules [/radiance],
performing a bullish manly deed.
24. They stood by the unbridled force and the resolve of Trita, while he was fighting,
(stood) by Indra at the overcoming of Vṛtra.
25. With lightning in their hands, heaven-bound—golden (helmet-)lips (stretched out) on their head—
the resplendent ones anointed themselves for beauty.
26. When you drove with Uśanā from afar to the "loins of the ox" [=Vala cave?],
like heaven it [=cave] roared with fear.
27. (Come) here to us, for the giving of bounty, with horses whose forefeet are golden—
come near, o gods.
28. When the chestnut side-horse guides the dappled (mares yoked) to their chariot,
the resplendent ones drive; they let flow the waters.
29. In (a place) of good soma, reed-filled, foamy, providing (soma's) dwelling,
the men drove in (their chariot) with down-turned wheels.
30. When will you come, o Maruts, to the inspired poet invoking (you) in just this way,
(come) with merciful (aid) to the one needing assistance?
31. What is this now, you fair-weather friends?!—since you have deserted Indra,
who vaunts himself on partnership with you?
32. O Kaṇvas, for us I will praise Agni along with the Maruts, who have maces in their hands,
who have golden axes.

33. I (would turn) hither the bulls, worshiped first at the sacrifice, hither for newer good progress,
would turn them who bring glittering prizes.
34. Even the peaks bend down, thinking themselves depths;
even the mountains hold themselves down.
35. Traveling crosswise the birds guide (the Maruts) here, as they [=Maruts] fly through the midspace.
(The Maruts) establish vital energy for their praiser.
36. Since age-old Agni has (just) been born, like a metrical verse, with the ray of the sun,
they [=Maruts] have extended themselves with its radiant beams.

VIII.8 (628) Aśvins

Sadhvaṃsa Kāṇva
23 verses: anuṣṭubh

Despite the Anukramaṇī ascription, the poet of this hymn repeatedly identifies himself as Vatsa (vss. 7, 8, 11, 15, 19), the Kaṇva. His composition is monotonously one-note: "Come/drive here to us" is found, with few variations, in the first seven verses and in a number of later ones (10, 11, 14, 17, 19); the Aśvins are urged to leave wherever in the cosmos they find themselves (e.g., vss. 3–4, 7, 14), in order to come to our sacrifice, and the usual anxieties about competing sacrificers who might tempt the gods to pass us by are on view (vs. 8). The poet's uncertainty about the location of the Aśvins and his desire to lure the gods to his sacrifice and away from his competitors are summed up in the final verse (23), with its paradoxical presentation of the "three footsteps" of the Aśvins, which are both visible and hidden. The evocation of Viṣṇu's three strides is probably deliberate, but the reasons for it unclear.

There is little other content in the hymn beyond the urged journey, the offered sacrifice, and the expressed hopes for bounties in exchange. Verse 10 briefly and obliquely alludes to the maiden Sūryā's mounting of the Aśvins' chariot, from the well-known myth about Sūryā's marriage, and the names of some successful clients of the Aśvins are listed in verses 20–21.

1. Come here to us, o Aśvins, with all forms of help;
you wondrous ones whose track is golden—drink the somian honey.
2. Now drive here with your sun-skinned chariot, o Aśvins,
you benefactors decorated in gold, you poets of deep perception.
3. Drive here from Nahus, here from the midspace by reason of our well-twisted hymns.
You will drink the honey pressed at the pressing of the Kaṇvas, o Aśvins.
4. Drive here to us from heaven, here from the midspace, o you (invoked with) "then, friends."

The son of Kaṇva has pressed the somian honey for you here.
5. Drive here to us for soma-drinking upon hearing
"*Svāhā*!" and the praise song—o strengthening Aśvins; (drive) forth by reason of our insightful thoughts, you poets and superior men.
6. Even as seers previously called upon you for help, o men,
drive here, o Aśvins; come right up to this good praise of mine here.
7. Come here to us even from the luminous realm of heaven, o finders of the sun,
you who are attentive to Vatsa by reason of his insights and listen to our summons by reason of our praise songs.
8. Do those other than us sit around (you) with their praise songs, Aśvins?
The son of Kaṇva, the seer Vatsa, has strengthened you with his hymns!
9. The inspired poet has called you here for help, o Aśvins,
stainless ones, best smashers of obstacles: become joy itself for us.
10. When the maiden [=Sūryā] mounted your chariot,
you set forth to all conceivable things, you Aśvins whose goods are prizewinning mares.
11. From there drive here with your chariot with its thousandfold raiment, o Aśvins.
Vatsa has recited for you his honeyed speech—he a poet, son of a poet.
12. The two delightful to many who bring many good things, the two minders of riches,
the Aśvins, as draft-animals, have bellowed out to this praise song of mine.
13. Provide to us here all bounties that won't shame us, o Aśvins;
make us follow proper sequence: don't make us subject to scorn!
14. When, Nāsatyas, you are in the far distance or when upon the circumference [?],
from there drive here with your chariot with its thousandfold raiment, o Aśvins.
15. O Nāsatyas, the seer Vatsa, who has strengthened you with his hymns,
for him provide refreshment with thousandfold raiment, dripping with ghee.
16. O Aśvins, offer nourishment dripping with ghee to him
who will praise you for your favor and will seek goods from you, o lords of the drop.
17. Come here to this praise song of ours, o you who care for the stranger and provide many benefits.
Make us very splendid, you superior men. Grant these things for us to prevail.
18. The Priyamedhas have called you here with all your forms of help—
you who rule over the rites, o Aśvins—(who listen) to their calls on your journey.

19. Come here to us as joy and luck itself, o Aśvins,
(to him), Vatsa, who has strengthened you with his insightful thoughts and hymns, o you who seek admiration.
20. With (those forms of help) with which you helped Kaṇva and Medhātithi, with which Vaśa Daśavraja,
with which Gośarya, with those help us, o men;
21. With which you helped Trasadasyu when the stake was to be decided, o men,
with those help us, to win the prize, o Aśvins.
22. Let the well-twisted praise songs and hymns strengthen you, o Aśvins, found in many places, best smashers of obstacles: become the ones who provide many desired things to us.
23. There are three footsteps of the Aśvins—though being visible they are hidden far away.
(Let) the two poets (drive) nearby along the flights of truth, away from (other) living beings.

VIII.9 (629) Aśvins

Śaśakarṇa Kāṇva
21 verses: bṛhatī 1, 4, 6, 14, 15; gāyatrī 2, 3, 20, 21; kakubh 5; anuṣṭubh 7–9, 13, 16–19; triṣṭubh 10; virāj 11; jagatī 12, all arranged in tṛcas

As is clear from the display above, a dizzying variety of meters is found in this hymn. However, as Oldenberg points out (1888: 151), save for the tṛca composed of verses 10–12, all these differently named meters are composed of combinations of eight- and twelve-syllable pādas, which combine easily and without confusion, and several tṛcas consist of a single meter (anuṣṭubh vss. 7–9, 16–18).

As in the previous hymn, the poet identifies himself several times as Vatsa (vss. 1, 6, 15); the Anukramaṇī's ascription to Śaśakarṇa ("Hare-eared") may be taken as a nickname or simply a fanciful invention, as it has no verbal support in the hymn.

The contents of the hymn are both as various as its meters and, underlyingly, as harmonious. Certain expressions recur throughout the hymn (half-verse initial *á nūnám* "here and now," alternating with simple *á* "here"; repeated *yád* and *yád vā* "when"/"or when"; repeated *prá*). The poet focuses on asking the Aśvins for aid and protection, and offers sacrificial service in return. A tṛca late in the hymn (vss. 16–18) is addressed to Dawn in her relation to the Aśvins, a connection that fixes the ritual time of at least that part of the hymn as the Morning Pressing.

1. Here and now, o Aśvins, come to the aid of Vatsa.
Hold out to him broad shelter that keeps the wolf at bay; keep away whatever hostilities there are.

2. What (manly power) is in the midspace, what in heaven, what through the five peoples of Manu,
confer that manly power (on us), o Aśvins.
3. (There are) inspired poets who have fondled your wondrous powers all over, o Aśvins—
even so, take note only of the son of Kaṇva.

4. Here is the hot milk poured around for you, o Aśvins, together with a praise song,
here the honeyed soma with which you will attend to Vṛtra [/the obstacle], o you who bring prize mares as goods.
5. What (healing remedy) you made in the waters, what in the tree, what in plants, o you of many wondrous powers,
with that help me, o Aśvins.
6. (Even) when you are bustling about, Nāsatyas, or when you are engaged in healing, o gods,
this Vatsa does not get enough of his poetic thoughts for you—for you go to the man with an offering.

7. Here and now the seer attends to the praise song for the Aśvins in exchange for a thing of value.
Here he will pour the most honeyed soma and the hot milk in the presence of the fire-priest.
8. Here and now you two will mount the swift-tracked chariot, o Aśvins.
Here should these praise songs of mine move you, like a cloud.
9. If today we would move you with our hymns, o Nāsatyas,
or with our voices, o Aśvins, even so, take note only of the son of Kaṇva.

10. As when Kakṣīvant (called) you, as when Vyaśva, as when the seer Dīrghatamas called you,
as when Pṛthi Vainya (called) you to the ritual seats, even so, take cognizance just of this.
11. Drive to us as protectors of our shelter and protectors from afar; become protectors of our moving (possessions [=livestock]) and protectors of our bodies.
Drive your circuit for our progeny and posterity (to prosper),
12. When you drive with Indra on the same chariot or when you come to share the same home with Vāyu, o Aśvins,
when you are joined in fellowship with the Ādityas and Ṛbhus or when you stand in the strides of Viṣṇu.

13. If today I should call on you in order to to win the prize, o Aśvins—
the might that is for victory in battles: that is the best help of the Aśvins.

14. Here and now, o Aśvins, drive here. Here are oblations set out for you;
here are soma-drinks for you at Turvaśa's and Yadu's (sacrifice) and here also among the Kaṇvas.
15. The healing remedy that is in the distance and (the one) nearby, o Nāsatyas,
with that now extend shelter to Vimada and to Vatsa, o attentive ones.
16. I have woken up with the goddess [=Dawn], simultaneously with my speech for the Aśvins:
o goddess, you have uncovered my (poetic) thought here, uncovered the gift for mortals.
17. Wake up the Aśvins, o Dawn—(wake them) up, o goddess, liberal and great,
(wake them) up in due order, o Hotar of the sacrifice [=Agni]. (Wake) up lofty fame for our exhilaration.
18. When, o Dawn, you drive with your radiant beam, you shine together with the sun.
This chariot of the Aśvins drives here along the circuit protective of men.
19. When the swollen shoots, like cows, yield their milk with their udders,
or when their voices have bellowed, those seeking the gods (wake) up the Aśvins.
20. Up for brilliance, up for swelling might, up for victory over men and for shelter,
up for ritual skill, you attentive ones—
21. Now when by reason of our insights you sit down at the womb of the father, o Aśvins,
or when by reason of your favors, you praiseworthy ones.

VIII.10 (630) Aśvins

Pragātha Kāṇva
6 verses: bṛhatī 1, 5, madhyejyotis 2, anuṣṭubh 3, āstārapaṅkti 4, satobṛhatī 6, arranged in pragāthas

Like the previous hymn, this one contains a number of different meters, though all fall into the twelve- and eight-syllable pādas that combine easily into mixed lyric hymns. Unlike the tṛca structure of the last hymn, this one is arranged in pragāthas, the first two of which (vss. 1–4) are irregular, while the last (5–6) has the familiar bṛhatī/satobṛhatī alternation.

The hymn is a distillation of one of the key themes in the much longer Aśvin hymns that precede it (VIII.8–9). The last pādas of the first and last verses are identical: "from there drive here, o Aśvins," and most of the rest of the hymn (vss. 1–2, 5–6) consists of speculation on where "there" might be, with an array of cosmic locations suggested. The middle two verses (3–4) invoke the Aśvins and remind them of their devotion to us and to our sacrifice.

1. If you are at (the place) providing a long seat [=earth/ritual ground], or if you are yonder in the luminous realm of heaven,
or if on the sea or in a house made ready, from there drive here, o Aśvins.
2. Or if you two have mixed the sacrifice for Manu, even so, take note only of the son of Kaṇva.
I call upon Bṛhaspati and all the gods, upon Indra and Viṣṇu and the Aśvins with swift missiles.
3. Now I call upon these Aśvins of very wondrous powers, the two made for grasping,
whose comradeship for us is preeminent and their friendship among the gods,
4. For whom (our) sacrifices and patrons are preeminent (even?) at the sunless time.
They are attentive to our sacrifice and ceremony—those who drink the somian honey after their wont.
5. If today you are in the west, if in the east, o Aśvins whose goods are prizewinning mares,
if with Druhyu, Anu, Turvaśa or Yadu, I call upon you—so come to me.
6. If you are flying in the midspace or if along these two world-halves, o you who provide many benefits,
or if, after your wont, you are standing upon your chariot, from there drive here, o Aśvins.

VIII.11 (631) Agni

Vatsa Kāṇva
10 verses: gāyatrī, except pratiṣṭhā 1, vardhamāna 2, triṣṭubh 10, arranged in tṛcas, with a final verse

This is the last hymn in the Vatsa group and the only one dedicated to Agni. Compared to earlier hymns in the cycle it is both brief and, as Renou points out (*EVP* 13: 147), elementary. Nonetheless it is a pleasing composition, with adroit deployment of contrastive terms, such as "mortal/god," and of parallel structures, such as "to be X-ed at Y" (vss. 1, 2, 10—the last also providing a simple ring).

1. You, Agni, are the protector of commandments, a god here among mortals here;
you are to be reverently invoked at the sacrifices.

2. You are to be proclaimed at the rites,
o overpowering Agni, as the charioteer of the ceremonies.
3. Keep away hatreds from us, o Jātavedas,
and ungodly hostilities, o Agni.

4. The sacrifice of the cheating mortal, even though it be nearby—
you do not seek it out.
5. Of you the immortal we mortals revere the many names—
(we) inspired poets (revere the names) of Jātavedas.
6. We inspired poets call upon the inspired one for help, we mortals upon the god for aid,
upon Agni with our hymns.

7. Vatsa will guide your mind here, even from your most distant seat,
o Agni, with a hymn whose desire is you.
8. Because you are of the same aspect in many places, preeminent throughout all the clans,
in combats we call upon you.
9. In combats we call upon Agni for help as we seek the prize,
upon him who provides brilliant bounties when prizes (are at stake).

10. For as the ancient one to be invoked at the ceremonies, the Hotar both from of old and also anew, take your seat.
Give pleasure to your own body, o Agni, and win good fortune for us through sacrifice.

Hymns 12–18 form the third group of hymns in Maṇḍala VIII, which, as Oldenberg notes in his *Prolegomena* (1888: 214), clearly belong together, despite the internal absence of poets' names and the varying attributions of the Anukramaṇī. All but the last of these hymns (VIII.18 [Ādityas]) are dedicated to Indra and arranged properly by descending numbers of verses.

VIII.12 (632) Indra

Parvata Kāṇva
33 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas.

Ṛgveda VIII.12 is tightly structured: the meter is uṣṇih (8 8 12), and in each tṛca the last four syllables of the final pāda form a refrain, which is, however, syntactically integrated into the verse. The last two tṛcas before the final one (vss. 25–27, 28–30) expand the four-syllable refrain to full pāda length (that is, the final twelve syllables), which retards the verbal progress and hints at the end to come. The long refrain of verses 25–27, "just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong," echoes the short refrain of the second tṛca (vss. 4–6), "you have waxed strong," and thus hints at a ring composition as well.

The verb form shared by those two refrains ("waxed strong," root *vakṣ*) is found elsewhere in the hymn, as are synonyms (root *vṛdh*: "grow strong, make strong, increase") and near synonyms ("spread," "swell"), and this verbal material provides the thematic spine of the hymn. Otherwise there is a mixture of mythological material, especially toward the end, and invitations to and descriptions of the sacrifice. In the final tṛca (vss. 31–33) the poet announces the launch of his own hymn, that is, the hymn to which this tṛca forms the end, and asks for the usual bounties from Indra.

1. Most powerful Indra, your exhilaration that is conspicuous as the best drinker of soma,
with which you strike down the devourer—for that we beg.
2. That with which (you helped) Daśagva and Adhrigu possessing solar glory, who sets atremble,
with which you helped the sea—for that we beg.
3. (That) by which you impel the great waters forth to the Sindhu like chariots
to travel the path of truth—for that we beg.

4. This praise song for dominance, purified like ghee, o master of the stones,
by which now in a single day with might you have waxed strong—
5. This one enjoy, o you who yearn for songs—it swells like the sea.
O Indra, with all your forms of help you have waxed strong.
6. The god from afar who has become ready for partnership with us—
spreading like the one who spreads the rain from heaven [=Parjanya], you have waxed strong.

7. His beacons waxed strong and the mace in his two hands,
when, like the sun, he made the two worlds grow.
8. When, o full-grown master of settlements, you devoured a thousand buffaloes,
just after that your great Indrian power grew forth.
9. With the rays of the sun Indra burns down Arśasāna;
victorious like fire over the woods, he grew forth.

10. This newer visionary thought goes to you, conforming to her season [/to the ritual sequence].
Rendering service, dear to many—she is (well-)measured indeed.
11. As embryo of the sacrifice, seeking the gods, (the thought?) purifies its intention following the proper order.
By praises of Indra it has grown—it is (well-)measured indeed.

12. Indra, who is the gain from our alliance, spreads himself out for soma-drinking.
(The thought) advancing like an axe for the presser—it is (well-) measured indeed.

13. Whom [=Indra] the inspired Āyus, whose conveyance is solemn speech, have brought to exhilaration—
like ghee, it swells in his mouth—(the speech) that belongs to truth.
14. And Aditi gave birth to the praise song for Indra, the sovereign king,
(the song) proclaimed by many for his help—(the song) that belongs to truth.
15. The draft-horses have roared to (him) for help and for his glorification.
Your two fallow bays, o god, do not follow a commandment separate (from the one) that belongs to truth.

16. When (you drink) soma in company with Viṣṇu or when with Trita Āptya,
or when in company with the Maruts you reach exhilaration with the drops—
17. Or when, able one, you reach exhilaration at a distance, upon the sea,
take pleasure just in *our* pressing with its drops—
18. Or when you are the strengthener of the presser, of the sacrificer, o lord of settlements,
or in whose solemn speech you take pleasure—together with the drops.

19. Upon hymning the god time after time, for (him) to help you, upon hymning Indra time after time,
then they came through to victory for the sacrifice.
20. With sacrifices (they strengthened) him whose vehicle is the sacrifice, with soma-drinks the best soma-drinker;
with libations they strengthened Indra—they came through.
21. Great is his guidance and many are the encomia for him.
All good things are for the pious man—they came through.

22. Indra did the gods set in front to smash Vṛtra.
To Indra did their voices roar—entirely for his might.
23. To him, great through his greatness, to him hearing the summons through our praise songs
and chants do we keep roaring—entirely for his might.
24. The mace-bearer whom the two worlds do not encompass, nor the midspaces,
just from his own onslaught he has flared up—entirely from his might.

25. When, o Indra, at the battle-charge the gods set you in front,
just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong.

26. When, o mace-bearer, with your vast power you smashed Vṛtra who was blocking the rivers,
just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong.
27. When Viṣṇu strode his three steps by your might,
just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong.

28. When your two beloved fallow bays grew strong from day to day,
just after that all these worlds held themselves in submission to you.
29. When the Marutian clans held themselves down for you,
just after that all these worlds held themselves in submission to you.
30. When you fixed yonder sun, the blazing light, fast in heaven,
just after that all these worlds held themselves in submission to you.

31. The inspired poet, through his insights, raises this good praise to you, Indra,
which guides its kin safely across, like footsteps, while the ceremony is pro(ceeding).
32. When they have sounded in unison in his own dear domain,
in the navel of the sacrifice, along with the milking, while the ceremony is pro(ceeding),
33. Indra, give to us the possession of good heroes, of good horses, of good cows,
like a Hotar, (for us) to be first in your thought, while the ceremony is pro(ceeding).

VIII.13 (633) Indra

Nārada Kāṇva
33 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas

Though, like the previous hymn (VIII.12), this one is in uṣṇih meter and arranged in tṛcas, the tight structuring of VIII.12 is absent here, save in the final tṛca (vss. 31–33) with its four-syllable refrain and repeated identifications with the "bull," and most of the tṛcas lack clear unity. The theme of growing and making strong found in VIII.12 is continued here, however—notably in the first tṛca (vss. 1–3) and that formed by verses 16–18, but also generally throughout the hymn. There are also less insistent links between different parts of the hymn (e.g., the tree branches of vss. 6, 17), and some pleasing turns of phrase, like the "sea of the stalk" (vs. 15) referring to a particular large vessel of soma.

Mythological material is mostly lacking in the hymn, and what is found is given perfunctory treatment (see the allusions to the Maruts in vss. 20 and 28–29). The focus instead is the usual give-and-take of the ritual compact. Although the hymn has no spectacularly memorable features, it does not seem to deserve Geldner's scornful dismissal as "ein recht nichtssagendes ['trivial' or 'vacuous'] Lied."

1. When the soma juices have been pressed, Indra purifies his resolve,
   which is worthy of hymns.
   He knows his own strengthening skill, for he is great.
2. In the first highest heaven, in the seat of the gods, he is the
   strengthening one,
   affording good passage, foremost in fame, entirely victorious amid the
   waters.
3. I call on him, on Indra the tempestuous, for the winning of prizes, for
   plunder.
   Become, for us in your favor, our closest comrade, for strengthening.

4. This gift here, o Indra who yearns for songs, streams for you from the
   one who presses.
   Becoming exhilarated, you rule over this ritual grass.
5. Now, o Indra, give us that which we pressers beg of you.
   Bring here to us the shimmering wealth that finds the sun.
6. When the boundless praiser makes bold his songs for you,
   your *vitality grows afterward as branches do, when they take pleasure.

7. As of old, I will give birth to the songs: hear the call of the singer.
   At every revel you have waxed strong for the one who performs
   (rituals) well.
8. Like waters going along a downward slope, they play—the liberal
   gifts of him
   who is called the lord of heaven by this visionary thought.
9. And who is called lord of the separate peoples—he alone exerts
   his will—
   by those strengthening (him) through reverence, seeking help. Rejoice in
   the pressed (soma).

10. Praise the famous one who is attentive to poetic inspiration, to whom
    belong the two overpowering fallow bays
    that go to the house of the pious and reverential man.
11. You of great thought, ramming through with your horses frothing at
    the mouth,
    with the swift ones, drive here to the sacrifice—for it is surely weal
    for you.
12. O Indra, most powerful lord of settlements, fix wealth fast in the
    singers,
    and immortal fame and goods for our patrons.

13. I call upon you when the sun has risen; I call upon (you) at the day's
    midday.
    Rejoicing, Indra, come here to us with your teams.

14. Come here! Run forth! Take the exhilaration of the pressed (soma)
    accompanied by cows.
    Stretch the ancient thread in the way that is known.
15. Whether, able one, you are in the far distance, whether nearby,
    Vṛtra-smiter,
    or whether at the sea of the stalk, it is just you who are our helper.

16. Let our songs increase Indra, let our pressed drops (increase) Indra;
    in Indra have the oblation-bearing clans found joy.
17. Just him did the inspired poets, seeking aid, (increase) with downward
    coursing help.
    The battle cries made Indra increase, as tree-branches do.
18. The gods stretched for themselves a noteworthy sacrifice among the
    Trikadrukas.
    Just him [=Indra] let our hymns increase—him who ever increases.

19. When the praiser, following his own commandment, has set out his
    recitations for you in proper sequence,
    he is called gleaming, pure, and unerring.
20. He perceives just that youthful (troop) of Rudra [=Maruts] in the
    ancient domains,
    where the discerning ones [=Maruts?] have distributed that thought.
21. If you will choose my companionship, drink of this stalk,
    by which we have crossed beyond all hatreds.

22. O Indra who longs for songs, when will your praiser become most
    wealful for you?
    When will you place us amid bovine and equine goods?
23. And your two well-praised bullish fallow bays pull your chariot
    to (the soma) most exhilarating to (you) who do not age—for whom
    we beg.
24. For him do we beg, him praised by many, the youthful one with his
    ancient forms of help.
    He will sit down upon the dear ritual grass once again.

25. Become increased, o you who are praised by many, with your forms of
    help that are praised by the seers.
    Milk out swelling refreshment, and help us.
26. O Indra, it is only you who are the helper of him who praises just so, o
    master of the stones.
    From out of the truth I raise to you my insight yoked by mind.
27. Yoking here your two feasting companions, for soma-drinking,
    cry out to the fallow bays that bring the "forth to that"
    wealth, Indra.

28. Let them cry out—those who are yours: the Rudras accompany your splendor,
as do the clans of Maruts, to your satisfaction.
29. These (clans), his advance (troops), find pleasure in the track that is in heaven.
In the navel of the sacrifice they have joined together, as is (well-) known.
30. This one—to take the long view while the rite is going forth toward the east—
measures the sacrifice in proper order, having surveyed it.

31. A bull is this chariot of yours, Indra, and your fallow bays are also bulls.
A bull are you, o you of a hundred resolves, and our call is a bull.
32. A bull is the pressing stone, a bull the exhilarating drink, and a bull this pressed soma here.
A bull is the sacrifice that you urge onward, and our call is a bull.
33. As a bull, I call upon you, the bull, o mace-bearer, together with your brilliant help,
for you cherish a responsive praise, and our call is a bull.

VIII.14 (634) Indra

Goṣūktin Kāṇvāyana and Aśvasūktin Kāṇvāyana
15 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn begins with a pleasing playfulness: the poet teases Indra by declaring that, if their places were switched, he (the poet as Indra) would be far more generous than Indra is now being (vss. 1–3), with the argument made in the next tṛca (vss. 4–6; see also 10–12) that the strength Indra acquires from the sacrifice gives him the power to be generous. Two tṛcas in the hymn are devoted to Indra's great deeds: verses 7–9 to the splitting of the Vala cave and the supporting of the heavenly realms, verses 13–15 to several different exploits, most notably the decapitation of the demon Namuci (vs. 13). Though Namuci is mentioned several other times in the text, this is the only place in the Ṛgveda that refers to the later story of Indra's trickery directed against Namuci: pledging not to slay him with anything dry or wet, he used seafoam as his weapon. (The earliest clear version of this tale is probably that in Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā IV.3.4, but it is recounted in several other Brāhmaṇa texts and into epic and Classical Sanskrit. See M. Bloomfield [1893: 143–63]. For a possible indirect reference in the Ṛgveda, see I.104.3.)

The gāyatrī meter and tṛca structure, combined with the conversational tone of the opening verses, give this hymn a light texture and informal style that contrast nicely with the more ponderous Indra hymns in the early parts of Maṇḍala VIII.

1. Indra, if I, like you, were, all alone, lord over goods,
my praiser would have cows as his companions.
2. I would do my best for him. I would want to give to him who possesses inspired thought, o lord of power—
if I were master of cattle.
3. Your liberal spirit is a milk-cow for the sacrificer, for the presser:
swelling, she gives the cow and horse as her milk.

4. There exists no one to obstruct your generosity, Indra, neither god nor mortal,
when, praised, you want to give bounty.
5. The sacrifice made Indra strong, when he unrolled the earth,
creating for himself a headdress in heaven.
6. You who have grown strong and won all the stakes—
we choose your help, Indra.

7. In the exhilaration of soma he spread out the midspace and the luminous realms—
Indra did, when he split Vala.
8. He drove up the cattle for the Aṅgirases, making visible those that were hidden.
He shoved Vala nearby.
9. Through Indra the luminous realms of heaven are firm and made firm,
stable and not to be shoved aside.

10. Like the waters' wave that brings exhilaration, the praise song hastens rapidly (to you), Indra.
The exhilarating drinks have shone forth for you.
11. For you are the strengthener of praise songs, Indra, the strengthener of recitations,
and the creator of good fortune for your praisers.
12. Just Indra will the hairy(-maned) fallow bays carry for the soma-drinking
right up to the sacrifice—him who is very generous.

13. With the foam of the waters you made the head of Namuci roll, Indra,
when you conquered all contenders.
14. They who, through their wiles, were trying to creep up and mount to heaven, Indra,
those Dasyus did you send tumbling down.
15. Indra, you made the community that performs no (soma-)pressing vanish away in all directions—
you as the soma-drinker getting the upper hand.

VIII.15 (635) Indra

Goṣūktin Kāṇvāyana and Aśvasūktin Kāṇvāyana
13 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas, with a final verse

Attributed to the same poets as the preceding VIII.14, this hymn is a more conventional praise hymn. It asserts the dominance of Indra over all the cosmos (esp. vss. 2–6), and conversely the contribution the cosmic entities and the various other gods make to Indra's power (vss. 7–10). The final tṛca (10–12), with its coda apparently addressed to Soma (vs. 13), seeks to harness all Indra's powers for victory for our side, and thus echoes the poet's opening charge to his comrades (vs. 1). The return to the beginning is also signaled by a ring-compositional device: the first two pādas of verse 11 are almost identical to those of verse 3 in the Sanskrit, though their translations diverge somewhat.

Both the language and the structure of this hymn are straightforward, but its relatively simplicity avoids the banal by the deft balancing of the powers in the two contrastive sections of the hymn and the unembellished grandeur of the rhetoric.

1. Sing forth to him, much invoked and much praised.
   Seek to entice mighty Indra here with hymns,
2. Him, the doubly lofty, whose lofty power holds fast the two
   world-halves,
   the mountains and plains, the waters and sun, through his bullishness.
3. You, o much praised one, are the ruler; you alone keep smashing
   obstacles,
   o Indra, to extend victories and (deeds) worthy of fame.

4. We hymn your exhilaration, an overpowering bull in battles,
   creating wide space, bringing the splendor of fallow bays, o master of
   the stone—
5. By which you found the lights for Āyu and Manu.
   Becoming exhilarated, you rule over this ritual grass.
6. Even today do the reciters praise this (deed) of yours, as in the earlier way:
   you shall win the waters, whose husband is a bull, day after day.

7. This lofty Indrian power of yours, your unbridled force and resolve,
   and the mace worthy to be chosen—these does the Holy Place sharpen.
8. Heaven increases your manliness, Indra, earth your fame;
   the waters and mountains spur you on.
9. Viṣṇu, the lofty dwelling place, hymns you, as do Mitra and Varuṇa.
   The Marut troop cheers you on.

10. You are the bull of the peoples; you were born as the most
    munificent, Indra.
    In every way you have acquired all things that bring good descendants.

11. In every way, o much-praised one, you alone stream over obstacles.
    None other than Indra spurs more action.
12. When, o Indra, they call upon you for help, every man for himself,
    according to his own thought,
    with *our* superior men win the sun now.

13. Fit (to be) a great dwelling for us, entering into all forms, (o Soma,)
    excite Indra, the lord of power, to victory.

VIII.16 (636) Indra

Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This is, in some ways, a meta–praise hymn, that is, a hymn *about* praising Indra. Although the hymn is certainly full of actual praise of the deity, it also repeatedly refers to invoking, praising, singing to, and giving recognition to Indra and his powers and deeds—in other words, to the delivery of the praise itself. Perhaps related to this feature is the noteworthy fact that Indra is in the 3rd person throughout the hymn, until the direct address and requests of the final verse (12). The constant 3rd-person reference is emphasized by regular fronting and incantatory repetition of 3rd-person pronouns referring to Indra (see, e.g., vss. 5–6, 8–9) and of his name (see, e.g., vss. 7, 9, 11).

As for the content of the praise, it focuses on Indra's power in warfare, where separate peoples vie for his aid. Yet, despite the battle theme, the descriptions are surprisingly devoid of violence, and it is Indra as maker of space (from constriction, vs. 6) and light (from darkness, vs. 10) and as the verbal advocate for his clients (vs. 5) who stands out.

1. Start up the praise anew with songs to the sovereign king of the separate
   peoples, Indra,
   the man who overpowers men, the most munificent,
2. In whom recitations find their joy, and all (deeds) worthy of fame,
   as the aid of the waters does in the sea.
3. With my good praise I seek to entice him, the preeminent king, effective
   at raiding,
   the prizewinner, for the gains of the great (prize?).

4. To whom belong the exhilarating drinks—unfailing, deep, wide,
   overwhelming—
   that produce his excitement at the contest of champions…
5. Just upon him do they call for intercession when the stakes are set.
   Whoever has Indra—they win.

6. It's just him that the separate peoples recognize by his exploits, him by his deeds:
"That's Indra, who creates wide space!"

7. Indra is the formulator, Indra the seer, Indra the many times much-invoked
great one with great powers.
8. He is to be praised, he to be invoked—the real "real thing," powerfully ranging.
Even though alone, he is overwhelming.
9. Him with chants, him with melodies, him with songs
do the separate peoples, the settlements make strong: Indra—

10. The leader to a better state, the creator of light in combats,
conquering foes in battle.
11. He, our deliverer, much invoked, will deliver us to the far shore by boat,
beyond all hatreds, with well-being: Indra.
12. You, o Indra—with prizes of victory do honor to us, and provide us a way,
and lead us to your favor.

VIII.17 (637) Indra

Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
15 verses: gāyatrī 1–13, bṛhatī 14, satobṛhatī 15

Coming at the end of the Indra collection in this self-contained group (VIII.12–18), this hymn consists of fifteen verses and is thus longer than the two previous hymns. This over-length, combined with its metrical disunity and the varying use of the verses in later Vedic ritual, suggests that the "hymn" is actually a composite of three: verses 1–10, consisting of three tṛcas plus a final verse; another independent tṛca, verses 11–13; and a final pragātha, verses 14–15. (For details, see Oldenberg 1888: 139 n. 1 and 214 n. 2.)

The first and longest of the three hymns (vss. 1–10) is a straightforward invitation to soma, urging Indra to make the journey to our sacrifice and promising an ecstatic immersion in the liquid. There are several striking images toward the end, especially that of the soma mixed with milk as a woman in disguise going to a rendezvous (if our interpretation is correct) (vs. 7), and a vivid picture of Indra in the grip of soma-exhilaration (vs. 8). Only the last verse (10), tacked onto the final tṛca, asks for something in return.

The other two hymns, or hymn fragments, are more opaque. The first (vss. 11–13) begins with a conventional invitation to Indra, but the following two verses address otherwise unknown men involved in some way in the soma sacrifice. The final pragātha (vss. 14–15) first gives a praiseful description of the soma drop in verse 14, but ends with yet another unknown man also engaged in the soma sacrifice, who seems to have some success in getting Indra to drink it.

1. Drive here—for we have pressed soma for you, Indra. Drink this!
Sit here upon this ritual grass of mine.
2. Let your hairy(-maned) fallow bays, yoked by sacred formulations, convey you here, Indra.
Listen to our formulations.
3. We formulators, with you as our yokemate, call upon you, Indra—
provided with soma, possessing pressings, we call upon the soma-drinker.

4. Drive here to us, who have the pressings, here to our good praises.
Drink of the stalk, (fair-)lipped one.
5. I pour (it) into your two cheeks. Let it run along and across your limbs.
Grasp the honey with your tongue.
6. Let it be sweet for you sweetening; (let it be) honeyed for your body.
Let the soma be weal for your heart.

7. Let this soma, completely covered (with milk), slink forth to you,
like (covered) women (to a rendezvous), o boundless Indra.
8. Strong-necked, bulging-bellied, mighty-armed Indra in the exhilaration of the stalk
keeps smashing obstacles.
9. Indra, go forth in front, holding sway over all with your might.
Smash obstacles, o smasher of obstacles [/Vṛtra].

10. Let your hook be long by which you hold out goods
to the sacrificer who presses (soma).

11. Here is your soma, Indra, purified down onto the ritual grass.
Come here to it! Run, drink of it!
12. Śācigu, Śācipūjana, this has been pressed for your joy.
Ākhaṇḍala, you are called forth.
13. O grandson, great-grandson of Śṛṅgavṛs—your (soma) to-be-drunk-from-a-jar:
upon that has (Indra) fixed his mind.

14. O Lord of the Dwelling Place, a steadfast pillar, armor for comrades in soma
is the drop, a splitter of strongholds, one after the other. Indra is the comrade of ecstatics.
15. Pṛdākusanu, worthy of the sacrifice, seeking cattle—even though he is one, he sur(rounds) the many.
He leads forward, by thrust and grasp, the ardent horse that is Indra, to drink of the soma.

VIII.18 (638) Ādityas

Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
22 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas, with a final verse

Like the other hymns to the Ādityas in VIII (47, 67), this hymn is fairly elementary and rarely strays far from its theme—the hope that the Ādityas (and, toward the end [vss. 16, 20, 21], other gods) will provide protection from various dangers and enemies and long life for us and our offspring. There is a fair amount of coherence within tṛcas—for example, the dominance of Aditi in verses 4–6, the repetition of *śám* "weal" and the four-syllable tag refrain in verses 7–9.

1. Here and now a mortal should seek a share of their favor,
   the unprecedented (favor) of the Ādityas, at the impulsion (of Savitar),
2. For the paths of these Ādityas are without assault,
   and undeceivable are the protectors who provide strength on an easy road.
3. Let Savitar, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman
   extend to us that broad shelter for which we beg.

4. O goddess Aditi, you whose burden [=fetus(es)] cannot be harmed—come here with the gods,
   along with patrons who provide good shelter, o you dear to many,
5. For these sons of Aditi know how to keep away hostilities—
   the faultless ones who make wide (space) even out of narrow straits.
6. Let Aditi (protect) our livestock by day, let Aditi the unduplicitous (do so) by night;
   let ever-strengthening Aditi protect us from narrow straits.

7. And this Aditi, (like) a *banner by day, will come with her help;
   she will make wealfulness and joy. – Failures away!
8. And those two heavenly healers, the Aśvins, will make weal for us.
   They should keep defect away from here. – Failures away!
9. Agni will make weal with his fires; let the sun blaze weal for us.
   Let wind, without defect, blow weal. – Failures away!

10. Away affliction, away failure—drive away bad thought.
    O Ādityas, keep us from narrow straits.
11. Keep the arrow from us, Ādityas, and thoughtlessness.
    Set hostility aside, o you possessed of all possessions.
12. O Ādityas, extend to us the shelter that will free
    even the sinful from his sin, o you of good gifts.

13. Whatever mortal seeks to harm us with demonry,
    that man should harm his own lifetime by his own devices.

14. Evil will get the defaming, cheating mortal
    who, full of evil rage, is double-dealing right here in our midst.
15. You are in the midst of simple folk, o gods: you know the mortal in their hearts—
    both the one who is double-dealing right here and the one who isn't, o good ones.

16. We would choose the shelter of the mountains and of the waters.
    O Heaven and Earth, put defect at a distance from us.
17. You, o good ones—with your beneficial shelter as a boat
    carry us to the far shore, beyond all difficulties.
18. For the sake of progeny and posterity make for us a longer lifetime to live,
    o very great Ādityas.

19. There is a sacrifice closer to you than your anger, Ādityas. Have mercy!
    Only in you do we abide—in your kinship.
20. The Maruts' lofty defense, the god Rescuer, the Aśvins,
    Mitra and Varuṇa—(all of them) do we beg for our well-being.
21. O Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa, o Maruts—your faultless, manly, praiseworthy
    protection providing threefold defense—extend that to us.

22. For even though we are men, whose kinsman is death, o Ādityas,
    extend our lifetime for us to live.

The next four hymns (VIII.19–22) are attributed to Sobhari Kāṇva by the Anukramaṇī and are dedicated to Agni (VIII.19, 37 verses), the Maruts (VIII.20, 26 verses), Indra (VIII.21, 18 verses), and the Aśvins (VIII.22, 18 verses). Sobhari addresses himself in every hymn but VIII.21.

VIII.19 (639) Agni (1–33), Ādityas (34–35), Trasadasyu's Dānastuti (36–37)

Sobhari Kāṇva
37 verses: 1–26, 28–33 pragātha strophes of kakubh (8 12 8) and satobṛhatī (12 8 12 8), except dvipadā virāj 27, uṣṇih 34, satobṛhatī 35, kakubh 36, paṅkti 37

Save for VI.16 with its 48 verses, this is the longest hymn dedicated to Agni in the Ṛgveda, but unlike the composite VI.16, this hymn shows clear signs of unity. This unity is evident (though more clearly in the Sanskrit) in the constant recycling and recombination of vocabulary, especially the lexicon related to sacrifice. Thematically the hymn focuses on Agni's role in the sacrifice and on mortals' tasks

in helping him fulfill that role. Numerous verses promise the favor and aid of Agni to the mortal who properly serves the fire (see, e.g., vss. 5–6, 9–14).

This reciprocal relationship between the god Agni and mortal men and Agni's mediating position between gods and men provide other themes in the hymn. The first verses (1–4) emphasize Agni's divine nature even while sketching his role as the Hotar parallel to mortal priests and chosen by them (esp. vs. 3ab), but this equivocal position of Agni is explored differently later in the hymn. Verse 24 again puts heavy emphasis on the fact that Agni is a god and immortal and also the Hotar acting for and established by men, but here he seems to be acting almost like a mortal himself—seeking the rewards of the sacrifice like a human priest. This subtle role shift leads to a more explicit and otherwise unthinkable one in the next verses (25–27), where the poet imagines himself as the god and Agni as his mortal server and claims that he, the poet, would act beneficently. (For a similar role reversal but with Indra and his mortal worshiper, see nearby VIII.14.) This flight of fancy ends quickly, and the proper relations between man and god are restored in verse 28.

The hymn also has a political agenda, coming to a climax in verses 32–33, but foreshadowed at various places earlier in the hymn. In verse 32 the poet announces that he and his fellows have come to the fire belonging to the great king Trasadasyu, the fire on which all other fires are dependent (vs. 33). As Proferes convincingly argues (2007: 33–34 and passim), the fire represents the king's sovereignty and is depicted as being made up of the fires of the individual peoples who give allegiance to the king, the brilliance belonging to each of these peoples being brought together in a team. Agni is thus not only the mediator positioned between men and gods, but also among different groups of men, and in both cases he is chosen for the role, put in that position, by men acting voluntarily.

The model of the sacrifice as reciprocal action and responsibility provides an implicit model for the state. As noted above, earlier parts of the hymn hint at what is to come. In verse 7 the poet hopes that his group can use their fires to provide good fire for an unidentified plural "you"—quite possibly the larger polity. The plural "fires" is significant: though in ritual context it can easily be taken as referring to the three fires on the ritual ground, in a political reading it can represent the dependent fires of verse 33. The next verse (8) refers to Agni as "a guest associated with alliance" (*átithiḥ... mitríyaḥ*). Again in ritual context this refers to the god's presence as guest in the house of a mortal and the alliance between gods and men thus effected, but in a political reading the alliance is the banding together of the peoples under Trasadasyu represented by Trasadasyu's fire. In verse 14 we find the curious and syntactically unusual expression "who will piously offer boundlessness throughout the domains." The word "boundlessness" is *áditi*, usually used as the name of the goddess Aditi, mother of the Ādityas, but more easily interpreted as a common noun here. Again, in a ritual context it may mean that the ritual ground is equivalent to the whole world and thus unbounded, but in a political context it may refer to the erasure of boundaries among the peoples who give allegiance to Trasadasyu and his fire. It may also indirectly promise the favor of the Ādityas, the gods who oversee the relationships among men, to the men who subscribe to this allegiance. The principal Ādityas, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman (as well as Bhaga), show up in verse 16, and already Agni was said to be Mitraic (/associated with alliance) in verse 8 (see also vs. 25). It is surely significant that the two verses following the climactic declaration about Trasadasyu's sovereign fire (vss. 34–35) are dedicated to the Ādityas, specifically Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. The final two verses (36–37) are a brief and uncomplex dānastuti of Trasadasyu.

It is hoped that this introduction gives some sense of the richness and intricate interconnections of this hymn; much more could be said.

1. Praise him who possesses solar glory. The gods have run to the god, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice).
   They have conducted the oblation among the gods.
2. Reverently invoke him of extensive generosity, o inspired poet—Agni of brilliant flame, the guider
   of this ritual offering of soma, o Sobhari. (Bring him) forth as the foremost for the ceremony.

3. We have chosen you, the best sacrificer, a god, an immortal, as Hotar among the gods—
   (you,) very effective for this sacrifice,
4. The child of nourishment, providing good fortune and good light, Agni of fairest flame.
   He will win for us by sacrifice in heaven the favor of Mitra and Varuṇa and that of the waters in heaven.

5. The mortal who by kindling, who by pouring, who by knowledge performs pious service to Agni, and
   who conducts good ceremonies with reverence,
6. It is his steeds that speed swiftly, his glory that is most brilliant,
   and no anxiety, whether god-made or mortal-made, will reach him from anywhere.

7. With our fires might we provide good fire to (all of) you [=assembled peoples]. O son of strength, o lord of nourishment,
   kindly disposed toward us, you provide good heroes.
8. Being lauded like a guest associated with our alliance, Agni is worth acquiring like a chariot.
   Peaceful ways that bring success abide in you: you are king of riches.

9. The mortal who conducts pious ceremonies in the stipulated way, he is to be lauded, o Agni, you who provide good fortune.
   Let him be a winner with his insights—

10. The one for whose ceremony you stand erect, he, controlling heroes, achieves success—
and (let) him (be) a winner with his steeds, and with his extollers; a winner of the stake with his champions.

11. The one in whose house the wondrous form Agni, possessing all desirable things, should take delight in the praise song
or in the oblations, while he [=Agni] keeps laboring at his labors,
12. Or in the gifts of the inspired praiser who is quickest, o youthful (son) of strength.
make *his* speech, when he has found it, one that brings the gods below and is above (that of) mortals, o good one.

13. Who seeks to attract Agni here with the giving of oblations, or (seeks to attract) the very skillful one with acts of reverence,
or him of nimble flame with song,
14. Who with kindling and with sharpening (of it [=fire]) piously offers boundlessness throughout his [=Agni's] domains,
that mortal, provided with good fortune, will cross over all things and (all) peoples with his insights and his brilliance, as if through the water.

15. O Agni, bring here the brilliance that will overpower any devourer in his seat
and the battle fury of the ill-intentioned man.
16. (The brilliance) by which Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman see, by which the Nāsatyas and Bhaga,
in that (brilliance) of yours might we receive ritual shares, (becoming) the best pathfinders by your power, helped (also) by you, Indra.

17. It is those of good intention who have installed you who provide the sight for men, o Agni, o inspired one—
the inspired priests (have installed you) as the very effective one, o god.
18. Just those (have made) the altar, o you of good fortune, they the poured offering; they have made the soma-pressing (to be) in heaven.
Just those have won the great stake along with its prizes who set their desire down in you.

19. Auspicious is Agni when he is bepoured; auspicious is our gift, auspicious our ceremony, o you who provide good fortune,
and auspicious our lauds.
20. Set your auspicious mind on the overcoming of obstacles, the mind with which you will be overpowering in battles.
Loosen the sturdy (bows) of those that are greatly defiant. Might we win with your superior powers.

21. With my hymn I reverently invoke the one established by Manu, the circle of spokes whom the gods have set down as their messenger,
the best sacrificer, who carries the oblations.
22. To the sharp-fanged one, the ruler of tender age—to Agni do you sing delight,
Agni who adorns his mass of heroes with his liberal gifts, when he is bepoured with ghee.

23. When, bepoured with ghee, Agni bears his axe up and down,
like a (rich) lord (he bears [=wears]) his cloak [=ghee].
24. Who, the god established by Manu [/man], set the oblations in motion with his sweet-smelling mouth—
he seeks to win desirable things for himself as the Hotar who conducts ceremonies well, (though he is also) an immortal god.

25. If, Agni, you were mortal and I were immortal—o you with the might of Mitra,
o son of strength bepoured (with ghee)—
26. I would not give you over to the curse, o good one, nor to evil, o my companion.
My praiser would not be in want nor ill-established, Agni, nor in an evil way,
27. But well kept here in my dwelling, like a son in that of his father. Let our oblation go forth to the gods!

28. Might I always keep company with your help that is so very nearby, o Agni, at your pleasure, o good one—
I a mortal, (with that) of a god.
29. With your will may I win, with your gifts, with your lauds, o Agni.
They say that just you are solicitude for me, o good one. O Agni, be aroused to give.

30. He advances himself through your help well provided with heroes and bringing prizes—
(the man) whose companionship you will choose.
31. Your drop [=spark], accompanied by dark [=smoke], bellowing as it is kindled at the right ritual moment, has taken, o you who desire to win.
You are dear to the great dawns; you rule [/shine] through the nights and at the dawns.

32. We, the Sobhari, have come to the one possessing a thousand testicles, well provided with superior power, for his help,
the sovereign king, (the fire) belonging to Trasadasyu—

33. You, o Agni, on whom the other fire are dependent, like branches (on a tree).
I team up the brilliant glories of the peoples as (poets team up) inspired poems, while I strengthen your powers to rule.

34. O you Ādityas without deceit—the mortal whom you lead to the far shore—
you who are the best givers among all the generous—
35. Any (man) holding power throughout the sons of Manu—you kings who conquer territories—
might we be those to you, o Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman; might we alone be the charioteers of truth.

36. Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, has given me five hundred brides—
the lord of settlements who is most munificent to his compatriot.
37. And, at the source of the (River) Suvāstu, the dusky (horse) of Prayiyu, of Vayiyu,
became the leader of thrice seventy (cows) for me. Good is the lord of gifts.

VIII.20 (640) Maruts

Sobharī Kāṇva
26 verses: kakubh alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

The typical Marut themes are deftly woven together in this hymn. After inviting them to the sacrifice (vss. 1–2), the poet first describes the effects in nature of the storm they embody (vss. 3–6) and then their flashy beauty and that of their chariot (vss. 7–12), ending this section with two verses (13–14) on their lack of individuality (see also vs. 21). The remainder of the hymn concerns the generosity of the Maruts and begs them to display it in response to Sobhari's hymn: the poet addresses himself in verses 19–20. Unlike the generic gifts generally asked for in Ṛgvedic hymns, the final verses make it clear that the poet has a specific request: Marut medicine to heal the afflicted (vss. 23–26). Their association with healing comes through their father Rudra.

The hymn exhibits a light touch and has a number of neat turns of phrase—for instance, verse 8, where "the music of the Sobharis is anointed with cows" indicates that their hymn reaps a bovine reward from the patron, or verse 19, with its pun on the participle *cárkṛṣat* meaning both "plowing" and "celebrating."

1. Come here; don't mean harm. Setting out, don't stay away, o you of equal spirit,
who are able to bow even the fixed things.

2. With your (chariots) whose wheel-rims are firm, with your very bright lights—o Maruts, masters of the Ṛbhus, o Rudras—
with refreshment come here to us today, here to the sacrifice, seeking the Sobharis, o you who are craved by many.

3. For we know the mighty forcefulness of the Rudrian Maruts, the strenuous ones,
of quick Viṣṇu, of the ones who grant rewards.
4. The islands keep flying further apart; misfortune stands still; they [=Maruts] yoke both world-halves.
The wasteplaces rise forth, when you stir (them), o you self-radiant ones with beautiful bangles.

5. (When you stir) even the unshakeable things on your drive, the mountains and the lord of the forest keep resounding.
The earth trembles at your journeys.
6. To allow your onslaught to drive by, o Maruts, heaven raises itself higher aloft,
when the men, strong in arm, keep putting their energies on display on their own bodies.

7. According to their nature, following their beauty, the men—greatly vibrant, impetuous, bullish in breath,
unobstructed in breath—drive themselves.
8. The music of the Sobharis is anointed with cows. Onto the chariot, into the golden (chariot) cask
(come) those well-born (Maruts), akin to a cow [=Pṛśni], (for us) to enjoy nourishment; the great ones (come here) now for us to gain.

9. O you who rain unguents, present oblations to your own bullish Marutian troop
whose leader is a bull [=Indra].
10. O Maruts, with your chariot with its bullish horses, bullish breath, bullish wheel-naves,
come here at will, like winged falcons, to pursue our oblations, o men.

11. Common to them (all) is their unguent; their brilliants glint on their arms.
Their spears keep flashing.
12. These mighty bulls with mighty arms do not arrange (such things just) on their bodies:
taut bows and weapons are on your chariots, beauties on your faces.

13. Of them whose name is vibrant and widespread like a flood, there is just one (name) for each and every one of them to enjoy.
Their might is like the life force of their fathers.

14. Extol these Maruts; praise them. For of these boisterous ones,
as of wheel-spokes, there is no last one. This is so as to their giving; as to their greatness is this so.

15. Very fortunate is he who was amid your forms of help at earlier dawnings, o Maruts,
or who will be also now.
16. Or the prize-seeker whose oblations you come here to pursue, o men.
He will attain to your favors, you shakers, along with brilliant things and the winning of prizes.

17. Just as they wish, so shall it be—they,
the sons of Rudra, lord of heaven, the ritual adepts, the youths,
18. The Maruts of good drops who deserve (the soma-drink) and who go about practicing generosity all together.
With a better heart even than this [=usual generosity], o youths, turn yourselves hither toward us.

19. To the youths, to the bulls, the pure ones, sing with your newest hymn, o Sobhari,
like a plowman to his cows [/celebrating (the Maruts) like cows].
20. Those who are victorious like a fist-fighter, to be invoked in all contests, among (all) Hotars,
those, like lustrous bulls, receiving the most praises—extol them with a hymn: the Maruts, yes!

21. Cows also, likewise akin through common birth, o Maruts of equal spirit,
lick each other's humps.
22. The mortal also will draw near to brotherhood with you, you dancers with brilliants on your breasts.
Take note of us, Maruts, for your firmly founded friendship exists always.

23. O Maruts of good drops, convey here to us (some) of your Marut medicine,
you comrades in the span.
24. Those with which you aid the Sindhu, with which you triumph, with which you favor Krivi,
with those kindly forms of help be a joy to us, you who are joy itself, you who do not partner hatred.

25. O Maruts possessing good ritual grass—what medicine is in the Sindhu, what in the Asiknī, what in the seas,
what in the mountains,

26. Seeing it, you carry it all on your bodies. With it intercede for us.
To ground (should go) the malady of the afflicted; make what has gone awry right again.

VIII.21 (641) Indra (1–16), Citra's Dānastuti (17–18)

Sobhari Kāṇva
18 verses: kakubh alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn ends with a brief dānastuti to king Citra (vss. 17–18) and begins with a pun on his name: in verse 1 Indra is described as *citrá* "brilliant." In between the poet ponders the various different relationships that he and his people might have with Indra, deploying a surprising range of terminology: "comrade" (vss. 2, 8, 14, 15), "kin" (vs. 4), "rival" (vs. 13), "friend" (vs. 13), and "father" (vs. 14). Amid the standard invitations to the soma sacrifice (e.g., vss. 3, 5) and praise of Indra's qualities (e.g., vs. 10), the poet depicts himself and his people as previously deprived of Indra (vs. 7), but as possessing hopes and visions of the god's entering into relationship with them (see esp. vs. 6), and he imagines what they could achieve if this relationship were activated (vss. 11–12). The stress on the 1st plural "we" (including Indra along with the mortals) and on "our" states of mind is highly unusual in Ṛgvedic poetry.

The poet's conception of possible relationships develops in even more unpredictable ways toward the end of the hymn. The pragātha strophe consisting of verses 13–14 begins strikingly by calling Indra friendless, and continues in verse 14 with a brief and idiosyncratic characterization of some who don't have relationships with Indra. The following pragātha (vss. 15–16) urges "us" not to miss our own chance with Indra, with a noteworthy comparison of "our" potentially damaging lack of activity to that of aging spinsters.

Thus, though much of the hymn contains conventional Indra-hymn material, there is a distinct "psychological" tinge to the poet's depiction of the interaction of his group with Indra. This depiction of an emotional bond between the worshipers and the deity makes the abrupt transition to the dānastuti all the more surprising, especially because the dānastuti seems to belittle Indra's giving in comparison to King Citra's.

1. O you without precedent—we, seeking help like people carrying something massive,
call upon you, the brilliant, in the prize contest.
2. That powerful youth of ours—in his daring—strode right up to you for help in action,
for it is just you that we, your comrades, have chosen as the helper who brings gain, o Indra.

3. Drive here. Here are the drops, o lord of horses, lord of cows, lord of fields.
   Drink the soma, soma-lord.
4. Because we inspired poets without (such) kin hold fast to you who have (those [=horses, etc.] as kin, o Indra,
   come here with all of them, which are your deposits, to drink the soma, o bull.

5. Like birds (in a tree), sitting by your exhilarating, strengthening honey prepared with cows,
   we keep bellowing to you, o Indra.
6. When we address you with this homage, will you hesitate even for a moment?
   Here are desires, and you are the giver, o possessor of the fallow bays. Here are we; here are our visions.

7. Only recently have we come together with your help, Indra, for previously, o master of the stones,
   we have not known your abundance.
8. We (now) know your comradeship and sustenance, o champion. We beg these of you, o wielder of the mace.
   And so make us sharp, good one, whenever a prize of cattle is (at stake), o you of beautiful lips.

9. Who previously led us to this better state right here, him shall I praise on your behalf,
   o comrades, for his help—Indra,
10. Possessor of the fallow bays, lord of settlements, conquering territories. Because as ever it is he who has reached exhilaration,
    the bounteous one will pursue for us, his praisers, a hundred in cattle and horses.

11. Surely with you as our yokemate, o bull, we could talk back to the snorter at the concourse of the people possessing cattle.
12. As decisive actors, we could be victorious in the decisive action, o much-invoked one; we could stand up to those of evil vision.
    With our superior men we could smash the obstacle [/Vṛtra] and swell with strength. O Indra, you have pursued our visions.

13. You are without rival, but by the same token, without friend, Indra, by birth and from of old.
    Only in battle do you seek friendship.
14. You never take on a rich man for companionship. The booze-fueled revile you.
    When you make your roar, you just shove (them all) together. It is because of that that you are called on like a father.

15. When we are in companionship with one such as you, Indra, let us not, like foolish (spinsters) who grow old at home,
    (just) sit still when (the soma) has been pressed.
16. Let us not miss out on your largesse, you whose gift is cattle. Indra, let us not complain about you.
    Seize hold of even the firmly fixed (goods) of the stranger and bring them here. Those who receive your gifts are not to be swindled.

17. Is it Indra (who gives) so great a bounty, or well-portioned Sarasvatī who gives the goods?
    Or is it you, o Citra, (who give) to the pious man?
18. Citra is the only king; the other petty little ones who (live) along the Sarasvatī are only kinglets—
    for like Parjanya with rain, he will thunder [/stretch forth] as he gives a thousand ten thousands.

VIII.22 (642) Aśvins

Sobhari Kāṇva
18 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī 1–7; anuṣṭubh 8; kakubh alternating with satobṛhatī 9–10, 13–18; kakubh 11; madhyejyotis 12, all arranged in pragāthas.

The metrical complexity of this hymn is not matched by corresponding complexity of content. The hymn focuses especially on the chariot of the Aśvins, as well as on their journey to us, the sacrifice with which we will welcome them, and the multiform aid we hope for in return.

Nonetheless there are a few striking images and turns of phrase, particularly in verse 6 where the Aśvins "plow barley with a wolf," an expression that cannot be separated from the similar one in I.117.21, likewise an Aśvin hymn, where they "scatter barley with a wolf." Starting with Yaska (6.26), the "wolf" has regularly been identified as a type of plow, though this recourse to agricultural technology could be taken as a reductive attempt to explain away the wondrous nature of the Aśvins' feats—here perhaps their ability to harness the power of a dangerous and semi-wild beast for a civilizing task. On the wolf as a cross-category in the Vedic conceptual universe, situated between the wild and the civilized and partaking of both, see Jamison (2008b).

1. I have called here this most wondrous chariot for help today,
   the one that you mounted for Sūryā, o Aśvins easy to call, you who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts]—
2. (The chariot) that is first to bring prosperity [?], that is easy to call, eagerly sought by many, enjoyable, first in the prize-contests,
   accompanied by favors, free of hatred, and without fault, o Sobhari.

3. These two gods who most often appear in many places, the Aśvins—
with our acts of reverence
may we bring them here nearby for help: they go to the house of the pious man.
4. One wheel of your chariot speeds around; the other, (though) at rest, drives you onward.
Let your favor run to us here, like a cow (to its calf), o lords of beauty.

5. Your chariot with its three chariot-boxes and golden reins, o Aśvins,
the famous one that busily circles around heaven and earth—with that, come here, o Nāsatyas.
6. Rendering service to Manu, early in the day you plow barley with a wolf.
O Aśvins, lords of beauty, today we would praise you together with your favors.

7. O you whose goods are prizewinning mares, drive right up to us along the paths of truth,
along which you spur Tṛkṣi, son of Trasadasyu, for great sovereignty, o bulls.
8. Here is the soma pressed for you with stones, o you men with bullish goods.
Drive here to drink the soma; drink it in the house of the pious man.

9. Ascend onto the chariot, into the golden (chariot-)cask, o Aśvins with bullish goods,
and so hitch up refreshments rich in fat.
10. With those (forms of help) with which you help Paktha, with which Adhrigu, with which Babhru deprived of pleasure,
with these come to us right away and swiftly, o Aśvins. Heal what is ailing.

11. When we Adhrigus call upon the Aśvins, the two Adhrigu [/who are not poor], at this very time of day—
we expressing admiration with our hymns—
12. With those (forms of help) drive here, o bulls, right to my call, which brings all good things and all that is worth desiring—
(drive here) with refreshment, as the most bounteous ones who most often appear in many places—with those (forms of help) with which they [=the Maruts?] strengthened Krivi, with those come here.

13. To these two at this very time of the days, to these Aśvins do I appeal, celebrating them,
and these two do we beseech with our acts of reverence—
14. Just these two in the evening, these two lords of beauty at dawn, and these two who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts] on their journey.

Don't look over and beyond us to a cheating mortal, o Rudras whose goods are prizewinning mares.

15. In the early morning I call their easily moving (chariot) to move easily here, or (rather I call) the overpowering Aśvins along with their chariot—
I, Śobharī, like a father.
16. With (your chariot) swift as thought, o bulls roused to exuberance, with your forms of help that come quickly,
even from far away come to be here for our help with your many (forms of help), you who bring many benefits.

17. O Aśvins, you superior men who are first to drink the honey, to us here drive your course providing horses,
cattle, and gold, o wondrous ones.
18. An abundance of good heroes, of good standing and well in advance, desirable, unassailable by the demonic,
and all things of value might we acquire at this journey of yours, o you whose goods are prize mares.

The next small collection of hymns (VIII.23–26) is attributed to Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva, with hymns to Agni (VIII.23), Indra (VIII.24), Mitra and Varuṇa (VIII.25), and the Aśvins and Vāyu (VIII.26). The names Vyaśva and its patronymic Vaiyaśva occur several times in these hymns, as does the name of the patron (Varo) Suṣāman, and the hymns are also characterized by the almost exclusive use of the uṣṇih meter (8 8 12). See Oldenberg (1888: 211–13).

VIII.23 (643) Agni

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
30 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas

The poet begins the hymn by urging himself to perform his sacrificial tasks (vss. 1–2ab), ending this little section with vocatives addressed to himself but seemingly designed to identify himself with his divine target Agni: "belonging to all domains" is often an epithet of Agni (as well as of Indra) and "having all in mind" (*viśvámanas*) could be a divine descriptor. However, at least according to the Anukramaṇī, it is the poet's own name, and he then (vs. 2c) speaks in his own 1st-person voice. This interactive quality is prominent throughout the hymn. The poet's self-address returns in verse 24, and in between he also addresses in the 2nd-person plural the assembled priests and worshipers, on whose behalf he is working (vss. 7–9; see esp. 9a, where he calls them "seekers of the truth"). (On poetic self-address see Jamison 2009a.) Agni's role in this social context, as clanlord of

clans, is also emphasized (vss. 10, 13–14, 20). Manu, the mythical founder of the larger Ārya sacrificial community known as the "descendants of Manu," is also duly remembered (vss. 13, 17, 25–26), as are the mythical seer Uśanā Kāvya (vs. 17) and the poet's immediate ancestor, the seer Vyaśva (vss. 16, 23), whose devotion to Agni and lucrative relationship with his patron, Ukṣan, merit mention and provide a model for Vaiyaśva's own gentle hint to his patron Varo Suṣāman (vs. 28). Thus the poet situates his praise of the god and his requests to him in a web of social relations and mutual dependency pertaining both in the current time and in the long history of the descendants of Manu.

Both the praise and the requests follow the common tropes of the genre, though often nicely executed. The focus is on Agni as the messenger of the gods and as the carrier of our oblations to them. Some of the tṛcas show thematic or syntactic unity (e.g., vss. 13–15 against demons and cheats), but the tṛca structure is not prominent, and there are bridges across tṛcas (e.g., the messenger theme in vss. 18–19).

1. Reverently invoke him to receive (our offerings); sacrifice to Jātavedas,
possessing curling smoke and flames that cannot be grasped,
2. To Agni the giver, with your hymn, o you common to all domains, who
have all in mind [/Viśvamanas (=the poet)].
And I shall praise the competitors [=flames], (drivers) of chariots,
3. Whose onward thrust, worthy of verses, (aims) to seize refreshments and
nourishments.
By close searching the driver [=Agni] finds the goods.

4. His flame has stood up and outward, the unaging flame of the
shining one,
of the very bright one of scorching fang, the glory of a warrior band.
5. Stand up with your divine body while you are being praised, o you who
conduct good ceremonies,
with your gaze (on us), blazing with your lofty radiance.
6. O Agni, drive (to the gods) with our good lauds, pouring oblations in
yourself in the proper sequence,
as you have become our oblation-carrying messenger.

7. I call upon Agni on your behalf, the foremost Hotar of the settled
domains.
I shall hymn him with this speech, and I shall praise him for you all,
8. Him of unerring will, whom, together with his body, they sweeten with
their sacrifices,
him, like an ally, well established among the people who abide in truth.
9. O you (people) who seek truth—in him abiding in truth, bringing success
to the sacrifice with our hymn,
in him do they [=the gods] take pleasure, in the footprint of our homage.

10. Let our sacrifices come in unbroken sequence here to the best of the
Aṅgirases,
who is the most glorious Hotar here among the clans.
11. O unaging Agni, these (flames) of yours, being kindled as lofty light,
are displaying their power like bullish horses.
12. O lord of nourishments, give us wealth with an abundance of heroes.
Further us in combats when progeny and posterity are at stake.

13. When the clanlord, whetted, is well pleased in the clan of Manu,
Agni repels all demonic powers.
14. O Agni, in harkening to my new praise song, you clanlord and hero,
with your searing heat burn down the wily demons.
15. Not by any wile should a cheating mortal be master of him
who offers ritual service to Agni with gifts of oblations.

16. The seer Vyaśva, seeking bulls [/Ukṣan (=his patron)], pleased you, the
finder of goods.
For great wealth might we kindle you.
17. Uśanā Kāvya set you down as Hotar—
you to win (goods) by sacrifice for Manu as Jātavedas.
18. Because all the gods, altogether, made you their messenger,
by harkening (to them), o god, you became the first one worthy of the
sacrifice.

19. This same immortal should the mortal, the hero, make his messenger—
the pure one of extensive power whose course is black.
20. With ladles extended, we would call upon him of good radiance and
blazing flame,
the unaging and ancient Agni, to be invoked by the clans.
21. The mortal who has dedicated a poured offering with gifts of
oblations to him
receives abundant prosperity and glory in heroes.

22. (It goes) first toward Agni Jātavedas, foremost at the sacrifices—
the ladle full of the oblation goes with homage.
23. Like Vyaśva, we would do honor to Agni with these most distinguished
(thoughts),
to him of blazing flame with most munificent thoughts.
24. Now chant to him of extensive power with praise songs like sturdy
posts [/like Sthūrayūpa],
o seer, son of Vyaśva—to the Agni of the household.

25. Him, the guest of the descendants of Manu, the son of the forest-lords
[=trees],
ancient Agni do the inspired priests reverently invoke for help.

26. Because he, the great one, is superior to all, (let) the oblations of the descendants of Manu (also be) superior.
O Agni, sit down on the ritual grass with homage.
27. Win for us many desirable things. Win of the wealth eagerly sought by many—
accompanied by good heroes, offspring, and glory.

28. O Agni, give the impetus to generosity to Varo Suṣāman and to his people,
each and every one, always—o youngest good one.
29. For you are the furtherer. Uncover for us refreshments consisting of cows and the winning of great wealth, o Agni.
30. Agni, you are glorious. Convey Mitra and Varuṇa here,
the sovereign kings possessing the truth and of refined skill.

VIII.24 (644) Indra

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
30 verses: uṣṇih (except anuṣṭubh 30), arranged in tṛcas

The first twenty-seven verses of this hymn are dedicated to Indra, while the final tṛca (vss. 28–30) is a dānastuti of the patron Varo Suṣāman, with Dawn the divinity addressed because of her association with the distribution of the priestly gift. The first two verses of the dānastuti are unexceptional in diction and tone, but the last verse (30) contains puns and neologisms, as often in dānastutis.

The rest of the hymn contains fairly standard praise of Indra, with special emphasis on his generosity—*rā́dhas* "generosity" is something of a signature word in the hymn, occurring six times—though his powers do not go unmentioned. The need to praise Indra to stimulate his giving is also a recurrent motif in the hymn, and the poet calls upon both himself (sometimes by name) and his companions to provide that praise (see, e.g., vss. 1, 14, 19, 22–23). Such interactivity was also characteristic of the preceding hymn (VIII.23) to Agni.

The hymn consists of tṛcas, but there is little unity within most of these triplets; instead, there are a number of instances of cross-tṛca transitions (see, e.g., vss. 3/4, 6/7, 9/10). The poet also makes considerable use of alliteration and, especially, of pairing derivationally related words. Verse 10 provides a particularly fine example of the latter practice.

1. Comrades, we direct our formulation to Indra who bears the mace—
I shall praise him on your behalf—to the most manly, bold one.
2. For you are famed because of your swelling might and, as Vṛtra-smasher, because of your Vṛtra-smashing [/obstacle-smashing].
With your bounties you outdo the bounteous ones in piety, o champion.

3. Being praised, bring here to us wealth that offers most brilliant fame—
you who are exclusively the good giver, o master of the fallow bays.

4. Tear out what is exclusive and dear to the peoples, Indra.
Being praised, bring it here boldly, bold one.
5. Hindrances obstruct neither your left nor your right hand,
nor do repulsions, o master of the fallow bays, in your quests for cattle.
6. I fit you out with my songs, as a pen with cows, o master of the stones.
Fulfill the desire and the mind of the singer.

7. All these things of the one who has all in mind [/Viśvamanas (=poet)]—o best Vṛtra-smasher—
study them well though our insight, o forceful leader, o good one.
8. O Vṛtra-smasher, o champion, might we know of this newer,
eagerly sought generosity of yours, o good one, much-invoked.
9. For, Indra, just as for you there exists a swelling might that cannot be encompassed, o dancer,
your giving to the pious man cannot be impaired, o much-invoked one.

10. Rain yourself down, o you who are greater than great, o best of men, for great generosity.
Being yourself steadfast, stand fast, bounteous one, for bounteous giving.
11. Never have our hopes gone to any other place than you, o master of the stones.
Bounteous one, exert your ability for us with your help.
12. For surely I do not find any other than you, for generosity, o dancer,
for wealth, for brilliance, and for swelling might, o you who long for songs.

13. Pour here the drop for Indra: he will drink the somian honey.
He will spur himself on in his generosity and greatness.
14. I have addressed the lord of the fallow bays as he engorges his skill.
Now listen to the son of Aśva as he praises.
15. For surely never before has a greater hero than you been born,
neither in wealth—not in just such a way (as you are)—nor in favor.

16. (Pour) right here what is more invigorating than honey, or pour, Adhvaryu, (what is more invigorating) than the stalk,
for in this way the ever-strengthening hero is praised.
17. O Indra, mounter of the fallow bays, none has reached up to your foremost praise hymn
in swelling strength nor in favor.

18. Seeking fame, we have called upon the lord of prizes on your behalf, (comrades,)
upon him who is to be strengthened by unremitting sacrifices.

19. Come now! Comrades, let us praise Indra, the superior man worthy of praise,
who all alone surmounts all the separate peoples.
20. For the heaven-ruling one who does not withhold cattle, who seeks cattle, speak a wondrous speech,
sweeter than ghee and honey,
21. For him whose heroic deeds are immeasurable, whose generosity is not to be circumscribed,
whose priestly gift surmounts everything, like light.

22. Like Vyaśva, praise Indra, who controls the prizewinning (horse) that rides the wave,
liberally apportioning the property of the stranger to the pious man.
23. In just this way now, o Vaiyaśva, praise him anew [/to the nines, and then] a tenth time—
the one who knows well, worthy to be celebrated by those who roam.
24. For you know how to avoid calamities day after day, o you with mace in hand,
as a preener [=water bird] does snares.

25. Bring that help here, Indra, with which, o most wondrous one, (you are there) for the (ritually) active man.
Once again pierce (Śuṣṇa?) for Kutsa and force (him) down.
26. We beg you now for a new (life?) for an older (man), o most wondrous one.
You are victorious over all our antagonists—
27. (You, the one) who releases (us) from the bear and from constraint or who (releases constraint) from the Ārya amid the seven rivers.
You have made the Dāsa's weapon bow, o you of powerful manliness.

28. Just as you conveyed wealth to Varo Suṣāman for his gain
and to the Vyaśvas, o well-portioned (Dawn) rich in prizewinning mares,
29. (Even so) let the priestly gift of Nārya come to the Vyaśvas, who provide soma,
as well as substantial generosity in hundreds and thousands.
30. When the sacrificer will ask you: "Where (is he), you where-actor?"
(you will answer:) "This 'Vala' [=the patron Varo Suṣāman], who is set apart, is descending toward the Gomatī (River) [/pen full of cows]."

VIII.25 (645) Mitra and Varuṇa (1–9, 13–24) and the All Gods (10–12)

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
24 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas

The only hymn in Maṇḍala VIII ostensibly devoted to Mitra and Varuṇa, it keeps its focus on these two gods only during the first part of the hymn (vss. 1–9), which celebrates them as sovereign kings possessing the truth. Starting in verse 10 other gods join the group besought for help and protection. In particular the Sun, as a representative of the Ādityas, is the main subject of two tṛcas (vss. 16–21). The final verses of the hymn (starting with vs. 19) turn their attention to the sacrificial setting. A simile concerning the ritual fire in verse 19 serves as a transition to this scene, and an address to the Sun in verse 21, which introduces the poet's "benefactors," likewise produces a transition to the final tṛca (vss. 22–24), a dānastuti praising the gift of several horses and a chariot.

Although the thematic structure of the hymn roughly tracks the arrangement in tṛcas, the tṛcas do not have strong internal cohesion, and there is relatively little verbal unity within them.

1. To you two, the herdsmen of all, the gods worthy of the sacrifice among the gods,
truth-possessing and of refined skill, shall I sacrifice.
2. They are like two charioteers along the (home) stretch (of a racecourse), the two allies [=mitras], Mitra and Varuṇa, who is of strong will,
both well-born descendants from of old, whose commandments are upheld.
3. Their mother, great truth-possessing Aditi, gave birth
to the two who possess all possessions, whose greatness (goes) forward to lordship.

4. Great Mitra and Varuṇa, sovereign kings, gods and lords [/devas and asuras],
truth-possessing, loudly sound their lofty truth.
5. The two grandsons of great strength, the sons of skill, strong-willed, possessing fat drops, dwell in the house of refreshment.
6. You two who control the drops, the earthly and heavenly refreshments—
let your cloud-accompanied rains drift here.

7. The two who from lofty heaven look down upon (us) as if upon your herds,
the truth-possessing ones were installed as sovereign kings for reverence.

8. Truth-possessing, strong-willed, the two took their place for sovereign kingship.
Their commandments upheld, the rulers attained their rule.
9. Better even than the eye at finding the way, by means of eyesight without motes,
even when blinking, the two attentive ones remain attentive.

10. And let the goddess Aditi, let the two Nāsatyas [=Aśvins] give us room;
let the Maruts, whose strength has increased, give room.
11. You (all) of good drops—give room to our roar by day and by night.
Not suffering harm, might we be accompanied by protectors.
12. Not suffering harm, we (sing) to Viṣṇu of good drops who does not smite.
Listen, o River traveling your own course, (for us) to be first in your thought.

13. We choose what is worth choosing, the best choice, worthy of protection,
which Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman protect.
14. And that (let) the River among the waters (grant) to us, that (grant) the Maruts, that the Aśvins,
and Indra and Viṣṇu—the generous ones of one accord.
15. For these superior men strike against the hostility of any zealot,
like roiling (rivers) their sharp surge.

16. This (Sun) here, as clanlord, gazes widely—the one (gazing) over the many.
We proceed according to his commandments and yours [=Ādityas'].
17. We follow the ancient accustomed ways of the one [=the Sun] associated with the sovereign kings [=Ādityas],
the long-heard commandments of Mitra and of Varuṇa.
18. He who measured on every side the ends of heaven and of earth with his ray,
he filled both world-halves with his greatness.

19. This Sun held up his light under the shelter of heaven,
blazing like fire when it has been kindled and bepoured.
20. The speech at (the place) providing a long seat [=ritual ground] gains control over a prize rich in cattle;
it gains control over non-poisonous food for giving.
21. I speak this to the Sun and to both world-halves, at evening and at dawn:
"Always rise up to us among our benefactors."

22. A silvery (horse) at Ukṣaṇyāyana's (sacrifice), a silver one at Harayāṇa's,
and a yoked chariot at Suṣāman's—these have we gained.

23. These two are overflowing with (bounties) of horses, with fallow bays, for me;
and the two (horses) that carry men (are overflowing) with those that get results.
24. With my newest inspired thought I have gained two altogether, along with their reins and with their whips,
two chargers great at the winning of prizes.

VIII.26 (646) Aśvins (1–19), Vāyu (20–25)

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva or Vyaśva Āṅgirasa
25 verses: uṣṇih, except gāyatrī 16–19, 21, 25 and anuṣṭubh 20, arranged in tṛcas, with an extra verse, 19, at the end of the Aśvin sequence

A long and rather repetitive hymn. The first nineteen verses are dedicated to the Aśvins and, as usual, urge them to drive their chariot to our sacrifice and to give us goods in return. There is little novel to capture the audience; the most striking image is found in verse 13: the unnamed god Agni, dressed in sacrifices like a bride in her wedding finery.

The final six verses belong to Vāyu, deified Wind, another god associated with the early-morning sacrifice, who receives the first soma drink there. He too is called to make the journey to our sacrifice and reward us for our offerings. He is twice (vss. 21, 22) designated as the son-in-law of Tvaṣṭar, the fashioner god—a somewhat surprising identification, given the tangled marital situation of Tvaṣṭar's daughter as tantalizingly sketched in X.17.1–2—where Vāyu is not in the picture.

1. I call your chariot for joint praise among our patrons,
o you of invincible skill, you bulls who bring bullish goods.
2. O Nāsatyas, to Varo Suṣāman for his great extension
do you drive with your help, you bulls who bring bullish goods.
3. We call you today with our oblations, you who bring prizewinning mares as goods,
as you become refreshed on the many refreshments beyond the nights.

4. Let your famed chariot, the best conveyor, drive here, o Aśvins, superior men.
(Then) you shall look closely at the praise songs of the powerful one for splendor.
5. Even as you follow your meandering course, you should turn your mind here, o Aśvins, who bring bullish goods,
for (then) you two, o Rudras, shall deliver (us) beyond hatreds.
6. For you two wondrous ones fly around the whole (world) in proper sequence with your prompt (horses),
as those who quicken our insight, as the honey-colored lords of beauty.

7. Drive right up to us, o Aśvins, together with all-prospering wealth,
as unbudgeable bounteous ones, bringing good heroes.
8. You two—come here to receive this (offering) of mine, Indra and Nāsatyas—
as two gods joined in greatest delight with the gods today.
9. Because we call upon you, (we) seeking bulls like Vyaśva seeking Ukṣan (his patron),
come here with your favors, o inspired poets.

10. Praise the Aśvins, o seer. Surely they will listen to your call
and burn up the niggards very nearby?
11. Listen to the son of Vyaśva, you two superior men, and you will know of this (offering) of mine,
as two of one accord, (you and) Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.
12. O holy ones, out of what is given by you and what is brought by you,
do your best for me along with my patrons day after day, o bulls.

13. The one who is swathed in sacrifices for you, like a bride in her (wedding) dress—
serving (him [=Agni]), the Aśvins have made (him) to be beautiful—
14. (Agni,) who will watch over your (circuit) of broadest extent, protective of men.
Drive around your circuit, seeking us.
15. For us drive your circuit protective of men, you who bring bullish goods.
As if mounting (a chariot) facing many directions, you have conveyed the sacrifice with our hymn.

16. Our praise song, best of calls at conveying, calls you as our messenger, o men.
Let it be for you, o Aśvins.
17. Whether you find exhilaration yonder in the flood of heaven or in the house of refreshment,
listen just to me, immortal ones.
18. And this one, driving brightly, best of rivers at conveying,
the Sindhu River with her golden track—
19. Together with this good praise and bright insight
do you travel, o Aśvins driving beautifully.

20. Yoke the two that power the chariot; team up the two flourishing (horses), o good one.
After that, drink our honey, o Vāyu; come to our pressings.
21. O Vāyu, unerring lord of truth, son-in-law of Tvaṣṭar—yours
are the forms of help we choose.

22. The son-in-law of Tvaṣṭar, the lord of wealth, do we beseech for wealth—
as the people who provide the pressed soma (we beseech) Vāyu for brilliant things.

23. Kindly Vāyu, journey here from heaven. Drive your good horse-flesh;
drive from great (heaven) the two broad-winged (horses) at the chariot.
24. For we call you to the seats of men (to be) the first to attain delight
(as we call) the horse-backed pressing stone—(call you) along with your munificence.
25. O god Vāyu, as the first to find exhilaration with your mind,
make prizes, waters, and insights for us.

The next group of hymns (27–31) is attributed to Manu Vaivasvata and consists of four hymns to the All Gods, followed by a very interesting praise of the Sacrificer and his Wife, the only direct mention of this latter figure in the Ṛgveda. On the group see Oldenberg (1888: 215).

VIII.27 (647) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata
22 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn to the All Gods falls roughly into three parts on the basis of the gods addressed. The first eight verses contain a number of named gods, whose associations seem random, rather than ordered into the usual functional groups—with, for example, the Maruts mentioned next to the Ādityas, singly or jointly, or to Agni. In contrast to this jumble of divine names, the middle section (vss. 9–14) mentions no gods except Savitar (vs. 12), and he is in service of the unnamed plural "you" used of the gods as a corporate entity. The unity and superimposability of the various gods in this section is made clear in verses 13–14. The final section (vss. 15–22) mentions only the Ādityas, though in fact they appear only in verses 15, 17, and 22.

Despite these differences in divine address, the hymn is unified by its concerns, especially the desire for protection and shelter offered by the gods (see, e.g., vss. 4, 9, 20), and by its vocabulary—in particular the epithet *víśvā-vedas* "affording all possessions" (vss. 2, 4, 11, 19, 20, 21) or, according to others, "having all knowledge, which is a near phonological match to *víśve devā́ḥ* "All Gods," to whom the hymn is dedicated. The ritual context is also very much present in the hymn.

On the basis of verse 12 and the sketch of Savitar's functions there, Geldner suggests that this is an evening hymn. But later in the hymn the poet insistently mentions various times of day (vss. 19–21), and so it seems rather that he is seeking the aid and protection of the gods round-the-clock, as it were.

The language of the hymn is fairly simple and straightforward, and the lexicon often repetitive. But the effect is pleasing, and the poem hardly deserves Renou's judgment (*EVP* IV: 106) that it is "banal" and "facile."

1. Agni has been set in front while the solemn speech (is being recited), as have the pressing stones and the ritual grass while the ceremony (is going forth).
   With a verse I implore the Maruts, Brahmaṇaspati, and the gods for help worthy to be chosen.
2. Here I have sung the (sacrificial) animal, the earth, the trees, Dawn and Night, the plants.
   And do you all, good ones affording all possessions, become furtherers of our poetic insights.

3. Let our ceremony go forth first to Agni among the gods,
   forth to the Ādityas, to Varuṇa of firm commandments, to the all-radiant Maruts,
4. For they all, affording all possessions, caring for the stranger, will be there for Manu, to increase him.
   With invulnerable protectors, you who afford all possessions—hold out to us shelter that keeps the wolf away.

5. Come to us here today, all of like mind and like delight—
   o Maruts, goddess Aditi, great House-Goddess—at our verse and our song to our seat.
6. Dear are those equine (gifts) of yours and dear to you the oblations to which you drive, o Maruts and Mitra.
   Let Indra, Varuṇa, the powerful men [=Maruts?], (and?) the Ādityas sit on this ritual grass of ours.

7. We who have ritual grass twisted for you and pleasurable offerings set out in due order,
   who have soma pressed and the fire kindled, like Manu, invoke (you), o Varuṇa.
8. Drive forth hither, o Maruts, Viṣṇu, Aśvins, Pūṣan, by reason of the poetic insight belonging to me.
   Let Indra drive here first, with those desirous of gain—he who is sung as the Vṛtra-smashing bull.

9. O gods without deceit, hold out to us unbroken shelter,
   a defense that neither from afar, nor even from nearby will (anyone) venture against, o good ones.
10. For there exists for you a common birth (with us), you gods who care for the stranger; there exists friendship.
    Commend us for previous good faring; right away (re)commend (us) for newer favor.

11. Because just now (I have dispatched) a praise invocation to you, just now for the distribution of desirable goods—
    to you who afford all possessions have I, doing homage, dispatched (it) like a lead(-cow).
12. O you of good guidance, for you has this Savitar, worthy to be chosen, stood up, erect.
    Down have settled the busy two-footed and four-footed, and those that fly about.

13. Every god among you for help, every god for dominance,
    every god for prizewinning would we invoke, singing with poetic insight (as our) goddess.
14. For the gods, all as one, are of like fervor for Manu, of like generosity.
    Let them be for us now, let them be in the future for our progeny, the finders of a wide realm.

15. I recite to you, o you without deceit, at the concourse of praise invocations.
    No injury (comes) to that mortal who has done honor to your ordinances, o Varuṇa, Mitra, (and Aryaman).
16. He furthers his dwelling place, ex(tends) his great refreshments, who does ritual service to your liking.
    He is propagated through progeny forth from his foundation.
    Unharmed and whole, he thrives.

17. That one acquires without fighting; along (paths) easy to go on he travels his routes,
    whom Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman protect—they of like generosity and like delight.
18. Even in the flat plain you make a niche for him; even in difficult going (you make for him) smooth flowing.
    Also this missile—it is now far from him—let it go unfaltering to destruction.

19. Since today as the sun was rising you established truth, o you of dear dominion,
    since at (sun)set, at awakening, or since at midday of the day, you affording all possessions,
20. Or since at evening, o lords, you held out shelter to the pious man who pursues truth,
    so might we stay nearby you, you good ones affording all possessions, in your midst.

21. Since today when the sun rose, since at midday, since at the (time of) covering [=evening?],
    you establish a thing of value for Manu the discerning oblator, o you affording all possessions,

22. We would choose this much-protecting (shelter) of yours, o sovereign kings, as a son would (his father's shelter).
May we, pouring the oblation, reach that by which we shall reach a better (state), o Ādityas.

VIII.28 (648) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata
5 verses: gāyatrī, except puraüṣṇih 4

A curious little fragment with no apparent unity, unlike the immediately following hymn. The common canonical number of gods, thirty-three, is mentioned in verse 1, and these undifferentiated gods are apparently our global protectors in verse 3 and able to attain all their desires in verse 4. Verse 2 mentions an oddly assorted set of gods: the three principal Ādityas, but also multiple Agnis, and two fairly marginal groups of divinities, the Wives of the Gods and the Gift Escorts. Though verse 2 names the divinities, in contrast to verses 1 and 3–4, it shares the ritual context of verse 1, which is lacking in the two following verses concerning the gods in general.

The final verse (5) is in the same riddling style as the following hymn (VIII.29), though in a different meter, and its vocabulary invites the identification of the "seven" as the Maruts (called thrice seven in I.133.6), especially since they are not found in the following hymn.

1. The gods, three beyond thirty, who sat down on the ritual grass,
they found and once again they gained.
2. Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, the Agnis with the Gift Escorts,
along with the Wives (of the Gods), are those to whom the *vaṣaṭ*-cry is made.
3. These are our herdsmen to the west, these to the north, these likewise to the south,
to the east—through their whole clan.
4. As the gods desire, just so will it be. No one will confound this (desire) of theirs,
not even a hostile mortal.
5. Of the seven there are seven spears; seven brilliancies are theirs;
seven beauties did they put on.

VIII.29 (649) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata or Kaśyapa Mārīca
10 verses: dvipadā virāj (so Anukramaṇī), but really dvipadā satobṛhatī

A very tightly and intricately structured riddle hymn. (See discussion in Jamison 2007: 75–77.) Each short verse (dvipāda satobṛhatī verses contain only twenty syllables apiece) identifies a god (or pair of gods) by attributes or behavior, but not by name—though the referents would be clear to the audience. It is thus, in the first instance, a list hymn. However, the poet has devised a method to endow the list template with both internal structure and forward momentum. In second position of each of the verses is a numeral. In the first seven verses it is *ékaḥ* "one," but verses 8 and 9 have *dvā́* "two" and the last verse plural *éke* "some" or, literally, "the ones," so that the verse structure builds through the categories of grammatical number, culminating in the only plural—though since *éke* belongs to the same stem as *ékaḥ*, there is also a sense of symmetry and return.

There is further structure within the subsections of the hymn. The *éka* verses, the first seven in the hymn, show an omphalos structure, with the three middle verses (3–5) having the identical sequence . . . *éko bibharti háste* "the one bears in his hand." The poet plays with number in other ways in this hymn: verse 7, the final verse containing "one," begins *tríṇi ékaḥ* "three the one. . . ." The referent is Viṣṇu and his three strides, so the poet, by introducing a new number, prepares us for our departure from the singular. Similarly, the next verse, the first with "two," also contains "one": VIII.29.8a *víbhir dvā́ carata ékayā sahá* "With the birds the two wander along with the one" [=the two Aśvins plus Sūryā], with the feminine instrumental *ékayā* providing a transition between the "one" verses and the "two" verses.

If we are correct, the lone and climactic plural *éke* in verse 10 also has a different status from the apparently parallel numerals in the previous verses. As previously noted, each riddling verse defines a god, but in this last verse the identity of the *éke* is not entirely clear: the Aṅgirases or Atri(s) have been suggested (see Geldner's note ad loc.). I would suggest instead that this verse now turns to the world of men by presenting the poets' self-identification. The poets themselves (or their ancestors) are the solution to this final riddle. They draw attention to their own creative activity (or that of their ancestors), and as often in final verses they make a sort of meta-reference to the rest of the hymn that precedes this announcement: it is this same hymn that they are chanting now. At the same time the rigid poetic parallel structure implicitly claims for the mortal poets the same status as the gods they have just celebrated, since they are numerically identified in the same type of riddle as the gods of verses 1–9. In favor of the view that human poets/ritualists are the subject of verse 10 is the presence of the words *árcanta(ḥ) . . . sā́ma* "chanting . . . melody." Joining these two words in the same clause seems intended to evoke the technical terms *ṛ́c* "verse" (of the Ṛgveda) and the *sā́man* "melody" (of the Sāmaveda) to which it is set, major components of Vedic ritual utterance, and therefore to mark the event depicted as a contemporary ritual of the present Vedic community. "Causing the sun to shine" may ascribe a cosmogonic act to the original performance of the ritual, or (more likely in our view) simply suggest that the hymns uttered at the daily dawn ritual actually ensure the rising and shining of the sun, rather than simply celebrating it.

Thus the poem skillfully combines and balances architectonic structures with forward, developing movement, and does so in a remarkably economical package. The development is not only formal, for the order in which the gods are presented takes us from the here-and-now of the ritual ground (Soma and Agni), through the mythical space where gods perform deeds that have effects on men (Tvaṣṭar, Indra, Rudra, Pūṣan), to the airy and heavenly spaces (Viṣṇu, Aśvins and Sūryā, Mitra and Varuṇa), ending specifically "in heaven" (*divi*). Yet, despite all this clever machinery, the hymn wears its structure lightly, and the mechanisms that provide so much pleasure are essentially invisible to the audience.

1. Brown, this one is changeable, a spirited youth; he smears golden unguent on himself. [=Soma]
2. In the womb this one has sat down flashing, the wise one among the gods. [=Agni]
3. An axe this one bears in his hand—a metal one—he firmly founded among the gods. [=Tvaṣṭar]
4. A mace this one bears in his hand, set there; with it he keeps smashing obstacles. [=Indra]
5. A sharp thing this one bears in his hand, a weapon—he blazing, strong, with healing [?] remedies. [=Rudra]
6. The paths this one swells; like a thief he knows of hidden treasures. [=Pūṣan]
7. Three (strides) this one, wide-going, has stridden, to where the gods become exhilarated. [=Viṣṇu]
8. With the birds these two wander, along with the one (woman). They go abroad like exiles. [=Aśvins and Sūryā]
9. A seat these two made for themselves, the two highest in heaven, sovereign kings, whose potion is melted butter. [=Mitra and Varuṇa]
10. Chanting, these ones thought up a great melody. With it they caused the sun to shine. [=human poets]

VIII.30 (650) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata
4 verses: gāyatrī 1, puraüṣṇih 2, bṛhatī 3, anuṣṭubh 4

The final hymn in this Viśve Devāḥ series consists of four verses in four different meters, though since they are all different combinations involving eight- and twelve-syllable pādas, the difference in meters is not jarring. Much more jarring—and, in our opinion, deliberately so—is the contrast between the slangy and popular register in verse 1 and the solemn, almost stilted rhetoric of the second verse, which explicitly represents itself as quoting the first one. The remaining two verses express conventional prayers for aid and protection, in much the same style as verse 2.

1. "Since there isn't a little runt among you, gods, nor a little kid, (you are) all just entirely great."
2. Thus shall you be praised, you who care for the stranger, who are the three and thirty,
   you gods who deserve the sacrifice of Manu.
3. Protect us; help us; speak on our behalf.
   Do not lead us far away from the path of the fathers, of the sons of Manu, into the distance.
4. O gods, all of you who are here and belonging to all men—
   to us hold out extensive shelter, and to our cattle and horse.

VIII.31 (651) Yajamāna + Patnī [Praise of Offering and Laud of the Sacrificer 1–4; Household 5–9; Blessings for the Household Pair 10–18]

Manu Vaivasvata
18 verses: gāyatrī 1–8, 10–13; anuṣṭubh 9, 14; paṅkti 15–18

This last hymn of the small Manu Vaivasvata collection shows its composite nature by its length, its mixture of meters, and, especially, by its themes. The first nine verses contain two parallel treatments of the same subject; verses 10–14 seem unconnected both with what precedes and what follows, and resemble some of the disordered All God sequences in earlier Manu Vaivasvata hymns (VIII.27.1–8 and VIII.28) in calling on an odd assortment of gods for protection; the final four verses (15–18) return to the topic of the beginning of the hymn, the benefits accruing to the punctilious sacrificer, though in rather general terms.

The beginning of the hymn, especially verses 5–9, are of extraordinary ritual interest, for they contain the only clear reference to the participation of the Sacrificer's Wife in Ṛgvedic ritual—participation which is, in our view, a ritual innovation in the late Ṛgveda. (For indirect references to her presence in Ṛgvedic ritual, see Jamison 2011 and forthcoming a and b, and discussion ad VIII.33.) As the Anukramaṇī states, verses 5–9 are dedicated to the "household pair" (*dámpatī*), who are depicted as jointly participating in soma preparation (vs. 5). Their rewards are great and appropriately domestic (see esp. vs. 8). Indeed, the mention of the "milk-mixture" (*āśír*, vs. 5) makes it quite likely that the ritual depicted is the Third Pressing, itself likely a ritual innovation, found only among certain Ṛgvedic clans, the pressing in which the participation of the Sacrificer's Wife is particularly prominent in later śrauta ritual (see Jamison 1996a: 126–46). The first four verses of the hymn mention only the Sacrificer, with no mention of the Wife, but a reference to the milk-mixture in verse 2 and to the benefits to his house (vs. 4) makes it likely that these four verses treat the same topic, though without the radical overt mention of the Wife.

The Anukramaṇī considers the final four verses (15–18) to be blessings for the same household pair (*dampatyor āśiṣaḥ*), but again there is no overt mention of the Wife, and, in contrast to verses 1–4 with its reference to the milk-mixture, the ritual that the successful sacrificer performed is left unclear.

1. Whoever will sacrifice for another and will also sacrifice for himself,
   who will press (soma) and will cook (the oblation),
   just that formulator will find pleasure of Indra.
2. Whoever will give the offering cake to him and the soma with its milk-mixture,
   able (Indra) will protect just him from difficult straits.
3. His chariot will be brilliant; god-sped, he will swell up,
   winning all (the things) of the enemy.
4. In his house inexhaustible Refreshment, possessed of offspring and milk-cows, gives milk day after day.
5. The household couple who with one mind press and rinse (the soma) with its own proper milk-mixture, o gods,
6. Those two go up against the puffed-up (rival pressers?); united they attain to the ritual grass.
   They do not fade out when prizes (are at stake).
7. Those two do not spurn the favor of the gods, nor seek to conceal it; they seek to win lofty fame.
8. Possessing sons, possessing children they attain a complete lifespan, both decorated with gold.
9. The two whose oblations are worth pursuing, divvying up goods, doing honor, for the sake of immortality,
   they slam together the hairy udder; they perform friendly service to the gods.
10. We would choose the shelter of the mountains, of the rivers, of Viṣṇu, who stays by.
11. Let Pūṣan come here, let Wealth, let Fortune, best establishing well-being and whole(ness),
    a broad road toward well-being.
12. (Let) Aramati [/Devotion] (come), (let) every unassailing one with the mind of a god,
    the faultless (gift?) of the Ādityas.
13. Just as Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa are our protectors, (so) are the paths of truth, which are easy to travel.
14. Agni, the foremost god of the good ones do I invoke for you all with a hymn—
    (I and you all) serving him, dear to many, like an ally who brings success to the cultivated lands.

15. Quick is the chariot of the one with god on his side, or a champion in battles of every sort.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.
16. You suffer no harm, o sacrificer, nor do you, o presser, nor you, o seeker of the gods.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.
17. Because of his (ritual) work no one can catch up to him, nor send him away, nor keep him away.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.
18. There will be (a mass) of good heroes here and also (a mass) of swift horses.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.

Hymns 32–34 form a small collection, with all three hymns devoted to Indra, and frequently mentioning the Kaṇvas internally (and attributed by the Anukramaṇī to three different Kāṇva poets). See Oldenberg (1888: 215).

VIII.32 (652) Indra

Medhātithi Kāṇva
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged for the most part in tṛcas

The hymn begins with a call to the Kaṇva poets to praise Indra's great deeds, and the next two verses (2–3) provide a quick catalogue of Indra's victories over several of his lesser known opponents. This theme, with some of the same names/epithets, returns at the end of the hymn (esp. vss. 25–27). In between we find the usual twin exhortations to Indra—to come to our soma sacrifice (rather than that of others; see esp. vss. 21–22) and to give us wealth and aid. The reciprocal obligation of the sacrificers and the recipient of sacrifice is nicely expressed in verse 16, where Indra's debt to (other) sacrificers has been discharged by his countergift.

There is nothing of particular note in this hymn, though it is nicely executed. It also contains several hapaxes and words with apparently non-Indo-Aryan phonology, especially toward the beginning, that give it a slightly exotic air.

The internal structure of the hymn is not entirely clear. We follow Oldenberg's analysis, whereby the hymn consists of tṛcas plus a final verse (30) save for verses 19–20, which form an incomplete tṛca with perhaps a verse missing. However, the tṛcas thus identified show little internal unity.

1. O Kaṇvas, with a song proclaim (the deeds) of Indra of the silvery drink
done in the exhilaration of soma,
2. Who smashed Sṛbinda (so he became) harmless, smashed Pipru the Dāsa puffed up like a snake [/Ahīśuva]—
he the strong one letting flow the waters.
3. Undermine the topside of Arbuda, the height of the lofty one.
You have done this manly deed, Indra.

4. To the famed one (bring) your (soma) boldly, like a torrent [?] from the mountain.
I invoke him of good lips for help.
5. Having become exhilarated, you will split apart the enclosure of the cow, of the horse
like a stronghold for your comrades in soma, o champion.
6. If you will take pleasure in my pressed (soma) or you will find delight in my solemn speech,
from afar come near through your own power.

7. We praisers abide in you, o Indra with your longing for hymns.
You drinker of the soma—quicken us.
8. And bring us food, granting it inexhaustible—
many are your goods, liberal one—
9. And make us possessed of cows, of gold, of horses.
Might we be clasped by refreshments.

10. We invoke him of stammering speech, of stout forearms, for help;
(we invoke) him who creates success, for aid.
11. Who as "hundred-intentioned one" then carries them out in the concourse as Vṛtra-smasher,
while providing many goods for the singers,
12. He as "able one" will be able for us, he who has gifts and brings them near—
Indra, with all his help.

13. He who is the great streambed of wealth, easy to cross, the partner of the presser—sing to that Indra,
14. The guider, the very steadfast one who wins fame in battles,
lord over much by his strength.
15. No one can restrain his powers, his liberalities;
no one can say, "he does not give."

16. There exists no debt to the formulators, nor to the puffed-up pressers now:
no soma has been drunk without a counter(gift).
17. Sing just to the admirable one, to the admirable one recite solemn words;
perform sacred formulations just for the admirable one.
18. The admirable one will tear out hundreds, thousands (of goods)—he the unobstructable prizewinner,
Indra, who is the strengthener of him who offers sacrifice.

19. Wander widely following your own power, following the invocations of the communities.
Indra, drink of the pressings.
20. Drink of (the pressings) that have their own milk-cows, both (the pressing) at the son of Tugra's [=Bhujyu]
and this one right here, which is yours, Indra.

21. Pass over him who presses with rage, the one who has pressed in violation.
This one here—drink this pressed gift.
22. Pass through the three distant realms; pass over the five peoples,
keeping watch over the nourishing streams, o Indra.
23. Like the sun its ray, let loose your rein. Let my hymns guide you here
like waters, converging, to the deep.

24. Adhvaryu! Pour out the soma for the belipped hero.
Bring of the pressing (for him) to drink.
25. Who split the bolt of the water and released the rivers downward,
who fixed the cooked (milk) fast in the cows,
26. He who is equal to song smashed Vṛtra, (smashed) the spider's son [/Aurṇavābha] and the one puffed up like a snake [/Ahīśuva].
With snow [/an icicle?] he pierced Arbuda.

27. To the strong one who lays low, the invincible victor,
sing your god-given formulation—
28. Who in the exhilaration of the soma stalk
oversees all commandments among the gods—Indra.
29. Hither let these two feasting companions, the pair of fallow bays with golden manes,
convey (you) to the pleasure set out (for you).

30. The fallow bays, praised by Priyamedha, will convey you near,
much praised one, for soma-drinking.

VIII.33 (653) Indra

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
19 verses: bṛhatī arranged in tṛcas 1–15, gāyatrī 16–18, anuṣṭubh 19

For most of its length (through vs. 15), this is an unremarkable hymn to Indra, with the usual invitations to him to attend our soma sacrifice along with praise of his overwhelming strength and requests for his bounty. Indra's "resolve" (*-krátu*) is frequently mentioned (vss. 5, 6, 11, 13, 14).

The last four verses (16–19), in a different meter, are also entirely different in tone and intent and have given rise to multiple interpretations—especially the final taunt (19d): "You, a brahmin, have become a woman." Our view of this tantalizingly opaque sequence is that it concerns the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife into the performance of solemn ritual, an introduction celebrated in the nearby hymn VIII.31 (see remarks there). But, unlike the situation in VIII.31, the poet of VIII.33 displays a conservative opposition to this ritual innovation, an innovation that he nonetheless ascribes to Indra's leadership. In verse 16 the poet complains that an unnamed ritualist no longer listens to the instructions of his fellow ritualists but only to Indra's. In verses 17 and 18 Indra speaks, and though he at first disparages women's intellect (vs. 17), he asserts that a sacrifice directed by a complementary pair (*mithunā́*, a word often used explicitly of a sexual couple) is especially successful (with implicit contrast to the older model without female participation)—while at the same time suggesting that the husband should keep the upper hand (or upper chariot-pole: the common metaphor of sacrifice as chariot is in play). The final verse is, in our view, spoken by the jaundiced poet himself. In the first three pādas he mocks his ritually innovative colleague by pretending to be a mother inculcating proper feminine behavior into her little daughter. The language is both slangy and heavily diminutivized, and the crucial noun in pāda c, the dual *kaśaplakaú*, is a hapax and unclear, though it may well refer to female genitalia. He then announces his reasons for this mockery: the innovative colleague, by favoring women's ritual participation, risks being tainted by the female presence and becoming a woman himself. (Such charges have frequently been directed at men who favor women's rights, at least since the time of John Stuart Mill.) For more detailed discussion, see Jamison (forthcoming a and 2011).

It is not entirely clear why this curious sequence is found tacked onto an otherwise ordinary Indra hymn. It occupies the position often taken by a dānastuti, and of course dānastutis often display a linguistic register similar to what is found here, slangy and colloquial vocabulary, syntactically informal direct speech, and sexual innuendo. It has been suggested that it is a sort of anti-dānastuti, a "satire" in the technical sense. This is an appealing explanation for its position in the hymn, but with the proviso that, at least in our interpretation, the target of the satire is clearly not the poet's patron (stingy or not), but a fellow ritualist.

1. We who are provided with pressings, with the twisted ritual grass,
   like waters
   at the outpourings of the strainer, take our seats around you,
   Vṛtra-smasher, as praisers.
2. The men provided with hymns cry out to you exclusively when (soma) is pressed, o good one.
   When will you come thirsting here to our house, to our pressed (soma),
   Indra, like a buffalo following its own track?
3. With the Kaṇvas, bold one, you will boldly tear out a prize worth a thousand.
   We beg for a tawny-formed (prize) consisting of cattle—right away, o unbounded bounteous one.
4. "Drink!"—sing (thus) to Indra, at the exhilaration of the stalk, o Medhyātithi,
   to the mace-wielder, who is linked with the two fallow bays, who, when (soma) is pressed, is a golden chariot,
5. Who has a good left (horse) and a good right one, the strong one, who is hymned as the one of good resolve,
   who distributes thousands, who has a hundred bounties, Indra, who is acknowledged as the stronghold-splitter,
6. Who is audacious, who is unobstructable, who is embedded within his beard,
   possessing extensive brilliance, rouser, much praised, in his resolve strong like an ox.
7. Who recognizes him when he drinks when (the soma) is pressed? What vigor has he assumed?
   This is the one who splits strongholds with strength, the belipped one getting exhilarated from the stalk.
8. Like a wild elephant he has established his wandering [=his territory] in many places, through his giving.
   No one will restrain you; you will come here to the pressed (soma); great, you wander about in your strength.
9. Though being strong, unprostratable, steadfast, perfected for battle,
   if the bounteous one will hear the call of a praiser, Indra will not stay away. He will come here.
10. This is truly so: you alone are the bull for us, with the speed of a bull, unobstructable—
    for as a bull, strong one, you are famed in the distance, as a bull famed nearby.
11. Bullish are your reins, bullish your golden whip;
    bullish is your chariot, bounteous one, bullish your two fallow bays; a bull are you of a hundred resolves.
12. Let the bullish presser press for you; o bull, flying straight—bring (prizes) here.

The bull has run to the bull in the waters. It [=soma] is for you, o mounter of the fallow bays.

13. Drive here, most powerful Indra, to drink the somian honey;
as bounteous one, (drive) on your own to the landing site. He of good resolve will listen to the songs, the sacred formulations, and the hymns.
14. You who bestride the chariot—let the fallow bays, yoked to the chariot, convey you hither,
even across what belongs to the stranger, across the pressings that belong to others, you Vṛtra-smasher of a hundred resolves.
15. Set our praise today nearest to yourself, you greatly great one;
let our pressings be most availing to you for exhilaration, you heaven-ruling soma-drinker.

16. [Poet:] He finds no pleasure in the instruction of you or me, (but only in that) of the other one [=Indra],
the hero who led us hither.
17. Indra said just this, "the mind of woman is not to be instructed,
and her will is fickle.
18. [Indra, cont'd:] "(Nonetheless,) it's the twin span, the complementary pair [/married couple], aroused to exuberance, that draws the chariot [=sacrifice];
but even so the chariot-pole of the bull [=husband] is higher."
19. [Poet:] " 'Keep your eyes to yourself: look below, not above. Bring your two little feet closer together:
don't let them see your two little "lips" [?].' For you, a brahmin, have turned into a woman!"

VIII.34 (654) Indra

Nīpātithi Kāṇva (1–15), the thousand ṛṣis of Vasurocis Āṅgirasa (16–18)
18 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–15, gāyatrī 16–18, arranged in ṭṛcas

The first fifteen verses of this hymn show a rigid formal structure that is awkward to convey in translation. The second half of each verse consists of a refrain, which implicitly contrasts with the first half of each verse. The refrain addresses an unidentified plural "you," who have driven to heaven and command heaven; we consider the "you" to refer to the other gods, as contrasted with Indra, or perhaps specifically to the Maruts. Most of the first half-verses begin with the preverb *á* "here" and generally call upon Indra to drive here (using the same verb as in the refrain) and participate in the sacrifice. Thus Indra's desired presence "here" is the constant counterweight to the removal of the other gods to heaven.

The other part of the refrain is a curious vocative, clearly addressed to Indra, *divā-vasu* "you who (bring) goods by day," found only here and of odd formation. The motivation for this form becomes clear in the dānastuti (vss. 16–18), where the patron's name is given as Vasu-rocis (vs. 16) "whose light is goods": Indra's epithet *divā-vasu* is a pun on and a metathesis of this name, with the *vásu* "goods" element reversed and *rocís* "light" replaced by *dívā* "by day." The similarity between this name and the relentlessly repeated epithet of Indra establishes an implicit identification between the human patron and Indra; even more strikingly, verse 16 asserts that the poet and the god Indra have jointly received rich goods from Vasurocis, so that even Indra is presented as a beneficiary of the largesse of Vasurocis.

The formal structure of the hymn continues to its very end: the final word of the hymn is the signature *á* "here," which also began it.

1. Here—Indra, drive here with your fallow bays, up to the lovely praise of Kaṇva,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
2. Here—let the soma-possessing pressing stone as it speaks hold you here with its cry,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
3. In this place their felly shakes itself, as a wolf does a lamb,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

4. Here—the Kaṇvas call you here for help, for prizewinning,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
5. I set out the first drinking of the pressings for you, as if for a bull,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
6. Along with Plenitude come here to us, as one whose vision is everywhere, for our help,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

7. Here—drive here to us, you of great thought, of a thousand forms of help, a hundred bounties,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
8. Here will the Hotar convey you—he installed by Manu, to be invoked among the gods [=Agni],
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

9. Here will the pair of fallow bays, aroused to exuberance, convey you, as
its two wings convey a falcon,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

10. Here—drive here, away from the stranger—hail!—to drink of the
soma,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods),
who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to
heaven.

11. Here—drive here to us to listen; take pleasure in the hymns here,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

12. Come here to us with your fully equipped (horses) of like form, o you
who possess fully equipped horses,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

13. Here—drive here from the mountains, from the surface of
the sea,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

14. Here—keep breaking out for us bovine and equine (wealth) in
thousands, o champion,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

15. Here—bring (it) here to us in thousands, bring ten thousands and
hundreds,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

16. Here—when Indra and I took from Vasurocis [/him whose light
is goods]
a thousand strongest equine livestock,

17. The silvery ones whose speed is the wind's, the reddish ones,
quick-streaming,
which shine like suns,

18. Amid the gifts of Pārāvata [/the one from afar (=Indra?)], amid the
swift (chariots) with speeding wheels,
I mounted on the middle of the wood(en chariot?) here.

The next four hymns (VIII.35–38) are attributed to Śyāvāśva Ātreya, whose Marut cycle in Maṇḍala V (52–61) is one of the glories of that dazzling book, and who is also the composer of a single hymn in the Soma Maṇḍala (IX.32).

VIII.35 (655) Aśvins

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
24 verses: pariṣṭājjyotis, except paṅkti 22, 24 and mahābṛhatī 24, arranged in tṛcas.

The Anukramaṇī's attribution of this hymn to Śyāvāśva is supported by his self-reference in verses 19–21 and his reference to his ancestor Atri in verse 19, but the virtuosity so characteristic of Śyāvāśva's Marut hymns in Maṇḍala V is not on display here. This long hymn may be one of the most repetitive in the Ṛgveda. In the first twenty-one verses the c-pāda is identical, and the tṛcas making up the hymn all have refrains encompassing at least the second half-verse (pādas cd: vss. 1–3; pādas cde: vss. 22–24) and usually the second (b) pāda as well (bcd: vss. 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, 13–15, 16–18, 19–21). This leaves the first (a) pāda as the only locus of variation in each tṛca, and even that variation is patterned and under strict control. Moreover, the contents and phraseology of the individual tṛcas do not differ significantly one from another—urging the Aśvins to come to the sacrifice with numerous other gods and to partake of our offerings while providing us with gifts and aid in return. The repetitive structure has an incantatory effect, but it does not challenge the decoding skills of the audience.

The most interesting tṛca consists of verses 16–18. As a number of others have pointed out, these three verses, asking the Aśvins to "quicken" or "animate" various things for us, are appropriate to the three varṇas in turn: verse 16 to the brahmin, 17 to the kṣatriya, and 18 to the vaiśya. In fact, verse 16 begins with the word *bráhma*, while 17 begins with *kṣatrám*. In 16 we ask for the Aśvins' aid for ritual and priestly elements, in 17 for elements related to kingly and martial power, and in 18 for our livestock and people. As is well known, the varṇa system is not a prominent feature of the Ṛgveda and may well only be taking shape in this period, but this small collection of Śyāvāśva hymns displays it clearly—not only in this tṛca, but in the next two twinned hymns (36 and 37) with their reference to *bráhman* and *kṣatrá* respectively.

1. With Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, and Viṣṇu, with the Ādityas, the Rudras, and
the Vasus,
in concert with Dawn and the Sun, drink the soma, o Aśvins.
2. With all insights and (all) creation, o prizewinners, in comradeship with
Heaven and Earth and the stones,
in concert with Dawn and the Sun, drink the soma, o Aśvins.
3. With all the gods, three times eleven, here in comradeship with the
Waters, the Maruts, and the Bhṛgus,
in concert with Dawn and the Sun, drink the soma, o Aśvins.

4. Enjoy the sacrifice; take heed of my call. – Come down here to all our
pressings, o gods.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, convey refreshment to us, o Aśvins.
5. Enjoy the praise song, like youths a maiden. – Come down here to all our
pressings, o gods.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, convey refreshment to us, o Aśvins.

6. Enjoy the hymns; enjoy the rite. – Come down here to all our pressings, o gods.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, convey refreshment to us, o Aśvins.

7. Like *hāridrava*-birds (to the woods), you fly right to the wooden (cups). – Like buffaloes (to water), you come down to the pressed soma.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive your circuit three times, o Aśvins.

8. Like geese you fly, like travelers on the road. – Like buffaloes (to water), you come down to the pressed soma.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive your circuit three times, o Aśvins.

9. Like falcons you fly to the distribution of oblations. – Like buffaloes (to water), you come down to the pressed soma.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive your circuit three times, o Aśvins.

10. Drink and satisfy yourself and come here. – Provide progeny and provide property.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, provide nourishment for us, Aśvins.

11. Conquer and sing praise and offer help. – Provide progeny and provide property.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, provide nourishment for us, o Aśvins.

12. Smite rivals and arrange allies in their place. – Provide progeny and provide property.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, provide nourishment for us, o Aśvins.

13. Accompanied by Mitra and Varuṇa and accompanied by their statute, accompanied by the Maruts you go to the singer's call.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive with the Ādityas, o Aśvins.

14. Accompanied by the Aṅgirases and accompanied by Viṣṇu, accompanied by the Maruts you go to the singer's call.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive with the Ādityas, o Aśvins.

15. Accompanied by the Ṛbhus, o bulls, accompanied by prizes, accompanied by the Maruts you go to the singer's call.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive with the Ādityas, o Aśvins.

16. Quicken our sacred formulation and quicken our insights. – Smite demons; keep away diseases.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, (drink) the soma of the presser, o Aśvins.

17. Quicken our lordly power and quicken our men. – Smite demons; keep away diseases.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, (drink) the soma of the presser, o Aśvins.

18. Quicken our cows and quicken our clans. – Smite demons; keep away diseases.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, (drink) the soma of the presser, o Aśvins.

19. As if to Atri's, listen to the first praise hymn of the presser Śyāvāśva, o you roused to exuberance.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, o Aśvins, (drink) the (soma) aged overnight.

20. Like gushes (of water), send gushing the good praise hymns of the presser Śyāvāśva, o you roused to exuberance.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, o Aśvins, (drink) the (soma) aged overnight.

21. Control the rites of the presser Śyāvāśva like reins, o you roused to exuberance.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, o Aśvins, (drink) the (soma) aged overnight.

22. Stop your chariot nearby. Drink the somian honey.
– Drive here, o Aśvins; come here. Seeking help, I call to you: provide riches for the pious man.

23. When the speech of reverence is set forth and the rite set forth, o men, in order to drink of the strengthening (soma),
drive here, o Aśvins; come here. Seeking help, I call to you: provide riches for the pious man.

24. Satiate yourselves on the pressed plant prepared with the *svāhā*-call, o gods.
– Drive here, o Aśvins; come here. Seeking help, I call to you: provide riches for the pious man.

VIII.36 (656) Indra

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
7 verses: śakvarī, except mahāpaṅkti 7

Despite the length and elaboration of the meter—a śakvarī verse consists of fifty-six syllables arranged in at least six pādas (for Oldenberg seven)—most of each of the first six verses in this hymn consists of refrain; only the first pāda, of twelve

syllables, varies in each verse. This structure is almost identical to that of the preceding hymn (VIII.35).

This hymn and the following one, VIII.37, although in different (but related) meters, are twinned conceptions. Both are seven verses long; both devote most of the first six verses to refrain, reserving only the first pāda of each verse for new material. The final verses of both hymns are almost identical save for a few lexical variants, the most important of which is the correspondence between *bráhmāṇi* "priestly formulations" in VIII.36.7 and *kṣatrā́ṇi* "lordly powers" in VIII.37.7. This correspondence suggests that the hymns were designed as appropriate to brahmins and kṣatriyas respectively, and though the formalized doctrine of the three twice-born varṇas seems to be taking shape only in the late Ṛgveda (see especially the Puruṣasūkta, X.90.11–12), it is surely no accident, as Oldenberg points out (*Noten* ad loc.), that this same group of Śyāvāśva hymns contains a tripartite blessing clearly referring to the three upper varṇas (VIII.35.16–18). Nonetheless in this hymn there seems little that is specifically applicable to the brahmin and only to him, and indeed the strong emphasis on victory in the refrain would seem more a warrior than a priestly preoccupation.

Since Śyāvāśva is best known for his Marut cycle in the Vth Maṇḍala (V.52–61), it is entirely appropriate that Indra is "accompanied by the Maruts" in this refrain. Śyāvāśva's ancestors the Atris (note his patronymic Ātreya) are also glorified in this hymn (vss. 6–7); the Atris are, of course, more at home in their own family maṇḍala, V, than in VIII.

1. You are the helper of the one who presses (soma) and twists the ritual grass.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
2. Help the praiser further, bounteous one; help yourself.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
3. With nourishment you help the gods, with strength you help yourself.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.

4. Begetter of heaven, begetter of earth—
   – o you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
5. Begetter of horses, begetter of cows are you.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
6. Make the praise of the Atris great, o you of the (pressing) stone.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
7. Listen to Śyāvāśva as he presses (soma), just as you listened to Atri as he performed (ritual) acts.
   Alone, you helped Trasadasyu in the conquering of men, Indra, strengthening the priestly formulations.

VIII.37 (657) Indra

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
7 verses: mahāpaṅkti, except atijagatī 1

For the relationship between this hymn and its twin, VIII.36, see the introduction to the previous hymn. As discussed there, the final verse (7) of this hymn with its reference to *kṣatrā́ṇi* "lordly powers" (as opposed to the "priestly formulations" of VIII.36.7) puts the hymn in the domain of the kṣatriya varṇa. Unlike the previous hymn, where the brahmanical aspect is muted at best, this hymn does present a kingly and martial profile in the variant material in the first pādas of verses 2–6.

1. You furthered this priestly formulation at the overcoming of obstacles, furthered (the formulation) of the presser—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
2. Winning battles against deceits, strong one—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.

3. As lone king do you rule over this creation—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
4. You, just alone, keep apart the two (hosts) in confrontation—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
5. Over both peace and hitching up (for war) you are master—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
6. You help one to lordly power, you did not help another—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
7. Listen to Śyāvāśva as he "rasps," just as you listened to Atri as he performed (ritual) acts.
   Alone, you helped Trasadasyu in the conquering of men, Indra, strengthening the lordly powers.

VIII.38 (658) Indra and Agni

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
10 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This simple hymn is defined by its structure. Each of the three tṛcas has a different refrain, though each of the refrains begins with the vocative dual dvandva *índrāgnī* "o Indra and Agni." The final verse (10) breaks the pattern, though the same dvandva is found, pāda-initial, in the genitive. In content the hymn is entirely devoted to the soma sacrifice and the poet's invitation to the two gods to come and enjoy it. The poet names himself in verse 9 and summarizes his poetic activity in the past tense. Such a summary is ordinarily found in the absolute final verse of hymns, but here it is capped by the pattern-breaking verse 10.

As often in hymns dedicated jointly to these two gods, who share little in terms of activities and attributes, they are either described in general terms or with epithets related to one or the other—for example, in verse 1 it is technically only Agni who is a "regular offerer of sacrifice" (*ṛtvíj*), while Indra is more appropriately the victor in prize contests (*vā́jeṣu*) than Agni. The third term in that verse, *kármasu* "in acts/deeds," is ambiguous, however, since *kárman* is regularly used both of the types of heroic deeds associated with Indra and with ritual acts more commonly ascribed to Agni.

1. Because you two are regular offerers of the sacrifice, winners in prize-contests and in (cultic/heroic) acts,
   – Indra and Agni, take note of this.
2. Streaming, driving on the same chariot, Vṛtra-smashing, invincible—
   – Indra and Agni, take note of this.
3. Here is the exhilarating honey for you two—the men have milked it out with stones.
   – Indra and Agni, take note of this.
4. Enjoy this sacrifice to your liking, (enjoy) the pressed soma, you jointly praised ones.
   – Indra and Agni, come here, men.
5. Enjoy these pressings here, because of which you conveyed the oblations.
   – Indra and Agni, come here, men.
6. This "turn" of song enjoy, my lovely praise.
   – Indra and Agni, come here, men.
7. Along with the early-traveling gods come here, you two of noble goods,
   – Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.
8. Listen to (soma-)pressing Śyāvāśva, (as you did) to the call of the Atris—
   – Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.
9. Thus did I call upon you two for help, just as the wise ones called—
   – Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.
10. Here do I choose the help of Indra and Agni in company with Sarasvatī,
    the two for whom the song is recited.

The following group of hymns, VIII.39–42, is attributed to Nābhāka Kāṇva, who names himself several times in VIII.40 and 41. The group is characterized by the slangy refrain that puns on his name, *nábhantām anyaké same* "let all the other squirts burst!" The poet is also partial to the mahāpaṅkti meter, found in VIII.39–41.

VIII.39 (659) Agni

Nābhāka Kāṇva
10 verses: mahāpaṅkti

Agni's role as messenger between heaven and earth and as mediator between gods and men is particularly emphasized in this hymn. And, in addition to his usual ritual role, his identity as poet is also mentioned several times (see esp. vss. 1, 7, 9). The hymn

contains an example of the well-known trope of "pouring prayers" (vs. 3), and in the middle of the hymn we find a pun on one of Agni's standard epithets Jāta-vedas, in verse 6 where it is said that he "knows" (*veda*) the "races" (*jātá*) of gods and men.

The hymn in general has a benign tone and high discourse level, and so the flippantly bloodthirsty refrain rests oddly in it. Only in verse 2 does it fit the contents, and even there the linguistic register is quite distinct between the verse proper and the refrain.

The poet handles the six-pāda structure of the mahāpaṅkti flexibly. The last pāda of each verse is the Nabhāka refrain. Otherwise the first two pādas (ab) and the fourth and fifth (de) pādas each group together, while the third pāda (c) belongs sometimes with ab (generally in the first part of the hymn) and sometimes with de (toward the end, vss. 7–9).

1. Agni have I praised, worthy of verses, Agni to be worshiped with invocation. Let Agni anoint the gods for us,
   for the sage poet acts as messenger between both (cosmic) divisions [=heaven and earth].
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
2. O Agni, (set) down on their [=gods'] bodies a laud with our newer speech. (Put) down the hostilities of the hostile ones.
   Let all the hostilities of the stranger, the hindrances keep away from here.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
3. O Agni, prayers to you I pour like ghee into your mouth. Be the discerning one among the gods,
   for you are the foremost gracious messenger of Vivasvant.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
4. Every kind of vigor does Agni acquire, even as (soon as) he longs for it—his oblation is the nourishment of the good ones—
   he acquires luck and lifetime, acquires joy, for every invocation of the gods.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Agni shows brightly through his very mighty, bright (ritual) action. He is Hotar of each and every (clan).
   He is decked out with gift-cows, and he impels (them) to the (gift-) reception.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
6. Agni knows the races of the gods, Agni (those) of mortals: (this is his) secret name [=Jātavedas]. Agni is the giver of treasure.
   Agni opens the doors, when well bepoured with a newer (speech).
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
7. Agni is joined with goods among the gods, among the clans devoted to sacrifice.
   With delight he fosters the many poetic arts, as the earth (fosters) everything—the god devoted to sacrifice among the gods.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!

8. Agni, who, belonging to the seven human (divisions), is fixed amid all the rivers—
   to him have we come—the one with three dwellings, the best smasher of Dasyus for Mandhātar, Agni foremost in the sacrifices.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
9. Agni inhabits the three (cosmic) divisions with their three parts, as sage poet.
   He will sacrifice to the thrice eleven (gods) here and please them for us, as inspired poet and messenger, when he has been prepared.
   –Let all the other squirts burst!
10. You, foremost Agni, among the Āyus, among the gods, alone have control over goods for us.
    Around you do the swirling waters circle, which are their own bridges.
    – Let all the other squirts burst!

VIII.40 (660) Indra and Agni

Nābhāka Kāṇva
12 verses: mahāpaṅkti, except śakvarī 2 and triṣṭubh 12

Unlike many Indra and Agni hymns, in this one the two divinities achieve some measure of independence, with the more significant role falling to Indra, who is mentioned alone in several verses, in part or wholly (2, 5, 6, 9, 10). Much of the content is martial, appropriate to Indra, and also more appropriate to the Nābhāka refrain than any other of the Nābhāka hymns. The freeing and winning of the waters is celebrated several times (vss. 5, 8, 10/11). There are several paired verses: 4 and 5 where Nābhāka is mentioned by name, and 10/11, the first to Indra, the second, almost identical, to Agni. The hymn ends with a verse in a different meter, without the refrain, that summarizes the hymn that precedes, as is often the case.

1. O Indra and Agni, victorious ones—you two will give us wealth,
   by which we might become victorious over the strongholds, even the firm ones, in the combats,
   as Agni (is victorious) over the woods especially when there is wind.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
2. For we do not stick you two together in a hole. But we sacrifice to Indra especially as strongest man among men.
   He will come here to us sometime with his steed to win the prize; he will come here to win wisdom.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
3. For these two, Indra and Agni, preside amid battle-raids.
   You two, sage poets through your poetic skill, on being asked, realize the visionary thought for the one seeking your companionship, o men.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!

4. Like Nabhāka recite to Indra and Agni with a worshipful song,
the two to whom this whole moving world belongs,
whose goods this heaven and the great earth bear in their lap.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Like Nabhāka, direct sacred formulations to Indra and Agni,
the two who opened up the flood with its seven (stream)beds, with its sloping banks—Indra, showing mastery through his strength.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
6. Hew (him) apart in the age-old way, like the tangle of a vine; weaken the strength of the Dāsa.
Might we then take a share in his goods, brought together by Indra.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
7. When these peoples here vie in invoking Indra and Agni with song at length,
with our men might we overcome those doing battle, might we win against those eager to win.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
8. The two bright ones [=sun and moon], who (come) down from heaven and will proceed upward every day,
(they do so) following the commandment of Indra and Agni; following the commandment of Indra and Agni the rivers go driving, those which the two [=Indra and Agni] freed from bondage.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
9. Many are your distributions (of goods to us), Indra, and many our encomia to you, o son of impulsion, possessor of fallow bays—
(many) the infusions of goods of the hero [=Indra], (and many) our visionary thoughts, which now reach their goal.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
10. Hone him [=Indra] with well-twisted (hymns)—the turbulent one, the "real thing," worthy of verses.
And he who even now will split the "eggs" of Śuṣṇa with his strength, he will conquer the waters along with the sun.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
11. Hone him [=Agni] affording good ceremonies, the "real thing" really there at the proper season.
And he who even now is solemnly proclaimed (as the one) who will split the "eggs" of Śuṣṇa, he has conquered the waters along with the sun.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
12. Thus to Indra and Agni, in the manner of the ancestors, of Mandhātar, of Aṅgiras, a newer (speech) has just been spoken.
With tripartite shelter protect us; may we be lords of riches.

VIII.41 (661) Varuṇa

Nābhāka Kāṇva
10 verses: mahāpaṅkti

A mystical hymn dedicated to Varuṇa alone, celebrating the god as cosmogonic creator and shaper of the world—both spatially, by measuring out the primordial cosmic domains and holding down and apart the cosmic realms (esp. vss. 4, 10), and temporally, by regulating the nights and days (vss. 3, 10). The sun and moon as his deputies function at the intersection of the spatial and temporal (vs. 9). The god is also presented as holding both human and natural phenomena within his encompassing physical protection (vss. 1cd, 3ac, 4de, 7abc).

The hymn seems to have a loose omphalos structure. Verbal correspondences in verses 2/9 (especially the "seven") and 3/8 (*ní √dhā* "deposit" and feminine plurals) provide a weak ring (see also the "three" in vss. 3/9 and "embrace" [*pári √svaj*] and "envelop" [*pári √mṛś*] 3/7). And the two middle verses, 5–6, the omphalos proper, point to the hymn's cryptic message—the creative power of poetry and of the knowledge and control of words, especially names.

Varuṇa's later association with the waters is evident in several hints in the hymn: his closeness to the rivers in 2d, who are also his seven sisters in 2e and the seven over which he has control in 9e, and his identification as "a secret sea" in 8a. The waters may well be the referents of the unidentified feminine plurals in 7a and 8c.

Much remains unclear in this hymn, however, and we do not claim to have penetrated all its many mysteries. One of the most obvious, but perhaps least interesting, puzzles is the relevance of the jaunty and bloodthirsty Nābhāka refrain to the high-minded and solemn contents of the hymn.

1. Chant to this one for him to prevail—to Varuṇa, and to the Maruts, the very wise ones—
(Varuṇa,) who guards the insights of the sons of Manu like the cows of a herd.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
2. (Chant to) him in the same way with a hymn, with the composed thoughts of our forefathers, and with the panegyrics of Nābhāka—
(him,) who is nearby at the rising of the rivers, having seven sisters he is in the middle (of them).
– Let all the other squirts burst!
3. He holds the nights in his embrace; by his magic art he deposited the ruddy (dawns). He (holds) everything in his embrace—the one lovely to see.
Following his commandment, his trackers [=nights?] increased the three dawns.
– Let all the other squirts burst!

4. Who is the one who fastened the peaks down upon the earth—the one lovely to see—he was the measurer of the primordial place.
That is the leadership of Varuṇa, for he is like an energetic herdsman.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Who is the upholder of the worlds, who knows the secret names of the ruddy (dawns), their hidden names,
he is a poet who fosters the many poetic arts, as heaven does its (concrete) form [=sun].
– Let all the other squirts burst!
6. In whom are fixed all poetic arts—(he is) like the nave in a wheel. Do honor to Trita [/the third one] with alacrity.
Like oxen in a pen to be yoked together, they have yoked the horses for yoking.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
7. Who lies on these [fem. =the waters?] (like) a cloak, while enveloping all the created things of these [masc. =the gods?] and their domains—
in Varuṇa's household, in front (of him), are all the gods, following his commandment.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
8. A secret sea, powerful, he mounts as if to heaven, when he has deposited the ritual formula in them [=waters?].
He scattered the magic arts with his ray as his foot, as he mounted to the celestial vault.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
9. Whose two bright, wide-gazing ones [=sun and moon] preside over the three earths, and three times have filled the higher (seats)—
steadfast is the seat of Varuṇa. He has control over the seven (rivers?).
– Let all the other squirts burst!
10. Who made the bright (days) and black (nights) becloaked following his commandments, he measured out the primordial domain—
he who with his prop held apart the two world-halves, as Aja (Ekapad) held up heaven.
– Let all the other squirts burst!

VIII.42 (662) Varuṇa (1–3), the Aśvins (4–6)

Arcanānas or Nābhāka Kāṇva
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, anuṣṭubh 4–6

This last hymn of the Nābhāka series is actually two hymns, on the grounds both of meter and of subject matter, as Oldenberg clearly states (1888: 213 n. 2). The first three verses, in triṣṭubh, are dedicated to Varuṇa. They continue the solemn

tone and the cosmic focus of the previous hymn to Varuṇa (VIII.41), but with none of the complexities. The Aśvins are the target of the second three verses (4–6), in a simple invitation to soma-drinking. The Nābhāka refrain is found only in this second hymnlet.

1. He propped up heaven—the lord who possesses all possessions—he measured out the expanse of the earth;
the sovereign king made all the living worlds his seat. All these are the commandments of Varuṇa.
2. Extol lofty Varuṇa thus: offer reverence to the insightful herdsman of the immortal.
He will extend to us shelter providing threefold defense. Protect us in your lap, o Heaven and Earth.
3. Sharpen the will and skill of the man who puts his best into this insightful thought, o god Varuṇa.
Might we board a boat that provides a good crossing, by which we might cross beyond all difficulties.

4. The pressing stones, inspired poets, have roused you two, o Aśvins, with their insightful thoughts,
for you to drink the soma, o Nāsatyas.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Just as the inspired Atri kept calling to you two, Aśvins, with his hymns,
for you to drink the soma, o Nāsatyas.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
6. In just this way have I called to you two for help, just as the wise have called,
for you to drink the soma, o Nāsatyas.
– Let all the other squirts burst!

As Oldenberg remarks (1888: 216), on the basis of agreements in lexicon, phraseology, and style it is likely that VIII.43–48 form a group, though they are not all attributed to the same poet.

VIII.43 (663) Agni

Virūpa Āṅgirasa
33 verses: gāyatrī, most likely arranged in tṛcas

Though it is likely that this hymn is constructed of tṛcas, there is little overt unity within the tṛcas. On the surface the hymn is a pleasant but generally unremarkable praise of Agni. His ritual functions are showcased throughout, and toward the end the "we" of the poet and his fellow sacrificers invoke him more and more insistently

in this role. But earlier in the hymn there is some nice naturalistic description of fire and fires (vss. 3–10). In verses 14 and 16 the poet emphasizes the kinship between himself and Agni as poet.

Another thematic strain evident in the hymn and asserting itself more and more toward the end is the role of Agni as a unifying focus of various clans and settlements in the larger Ārya community. In several early verses multiple fires are kindled at once (vss. 4–5). In light of later parts of the hymn, these can be interpreted as the separate family or clan fires, which are later joined conceptually in the single fire to which all the separate groups give allegiance (see esp. vs. 18, also 27, 29). This single fire, found in multiple places but shared by all the clans, is invoked for help in combat in verse 21. Agni's competitive (vss. 20, 25), martial (vss. 21, 23, 26, 32), and ruling (vs. 24) aspects become more prominent in the second half of the hymn; the sacrificers clearly wish to harness these powers for the good of the whole community. Though not insistent, this theme is pervasive and provides a subtle unity to this superficially rambling thirty-three-verse composition.

1. For the inspired poet, the ritual adept, the indestructible sacrificer,
   for Agni—
   these hymns, these praises arise right here.
2. For you right here, yearning for it, o unbounded Jātavedas,
   o Agni, I generate a lovely praise hymn.
3. Like brilliants, certainly, are your sharp scintillations, Agni.
   With their teeth they snap at the woods.

4. The fallow bays with smoke as their beacon, sped by the wind up
   toward heaven,
   take up opposing positions—the fires.
5. These fires kindled here in opposing (places) have come to sight all
   at once,
   like the beacons of the dawns.
6. Black are the realms at the feet of Jātavedas on his advance,
   when Agni grows on the earth.

7. Making the plants his wellspring (of nourishment), snapping (at them),
   Agni does not become extinguished,
   as he comes once again to the tender ones.
8. Bending back and forth with his tongues, flickering here and there with
   his flame,
   Agni shines brightly in the woods.
9. In the waters is your seat, Agni. You grow through the plants.
   While (still) being in their womb, you are born again.

10. This flame of yours, Agni, when bepoured, blazes up from the ghee,
    kissing the offering spoons on the mouth.

11. To him whose food is oxen, whose food is barren cows, to the ritual
    adept with soma on his back—
    to Agni we would do honor with praises.
12. And you, o Hotar whose resolve is worthy to be chosen, with homage
    and with kindling sticks do we beseech, o Agni.

13. And you, o Agni blazing when bepoured, like Bhṛgu, like Manu,
    like Aṅgiras, do we invoke.
14. For you—o Fire by fire, a poet by a poet, the real (thing) by a
    real (man),
    a comrade by a comrade—are kindled.
15. You—to the pious poet grant wealth in thousands,
    o Agni, and refreshment abounding in heroes.

16. O Brother Agni, made by might, having ruddy horses, of blazing
    commandment—
    enjoy this praise of mine.
17. And you, Agni, have my praises reached—(the praises generated) for
    the bellowing one who yearns for (them)—
    like cows their cow-stall.
18. For you, best of the Aṅgirases, all these lovely settlements have separately
    yielded themselves to your desire, Agni.

19. With their insightful thoughts the inspired wise ones who are attentive
    to poetic inspiration
    have spurred Agni to join their meal.
20. You, Agni, prizewinner on the drives, do those who stretch out their
    ceremony
    reverently invoke as draft-horse (of the sacrifice), as Hotar.
21. Because you are of the same aspect in many places, preeminent
    throughout all the clans,
    in combats we call upon you.

22. Reverently invoke him, Agni who flashes forth when bepoured with
    (streams of) ghee.
    He will listen to this call of ours.
23. It is you we call upon, the listening Jātavedas,
    who smash away hatreds, o Agni.
24. The infallible ruler of the clans, this overseer here of the (ritual)
    statutes—
    Agni do I reverently invoke: he will listen.

25. Agni pulsing with excitement all his life—like a young blood spurred on
    to seek the prize,
    like a (prize-seeking) team do we incite him.

26. Smashing away insults and hatreds, burning demonic forces everywhere,
Agni, shine with your sharp (flame).
27. You whom the peoples kindle, as Manu did, o best of the Aṅgirases,
Agni, take cognizance of my speech.

28. O might-made Agni, whether you are born in heaven or born in the waters,
we call upon you with hymns.
29. To you do these peoples here, all the lovely settlements separately,
impel the wellspring (of nourishment) to be eaten.
30. O Agni, may we be very attentive and with manly gaze,
crossing over difficult depths through all the days.

31. Agni, the gladdening one dear to many, sharp, pure-flamed,
do we implore with gladdening hearts.
32. You, Agni, with far-radiant goods, dispatching (darkness) like the sun with its rays,
vaunting yourself, you keep smashing the dark shades.
33. This we implore of you, mighty one—that your giving does not give out.
From you, Agni, (comes) the good thing worthy to be chosen.

VIII.44 (664) Agni

Virūpa Āṅgirasa
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Like the last hymn, this one, though apparently divided into tṛcas, shows little unity within the tṛcas. Indeed, this hymn does appear to ramble, unlike the last one, in which several persistent themes provided structure. There are several signature words, especially forms of the root *śuc* "flame, blaze" and of the nominal *vásu* "good/goods." Agni's ritual function is the dominant topic, and his twin and contrasting roles as *vípra* "inspired poet" (vss. 10, 12, 21, 29) and *kaví* "sage poet" (vss. 7, 12, 21, 26, 30) are regularly mentioned. But there is no clear development in the hymn, and most of the verses contain standard descriptions and addresses to the god.

1. With a kindling stick do friendly service to Agni; with (streams of) ghee awaken the guest.
Into him pour oblations.
2. Agni, enjoy my praise. Grow strong through this thought.
Take delight in our hymns.

3. Agni I place in front as messenger; I appeal to him as the conveyor of the oblation:
he will make the gods sit down here.

4. Your lofty beams rise upward as you are kindled,
upward the flaming ones, shining Agni.
5. Let my ghee-filled offering spoons come near to you, delightful one.
Agni, enjoy our oblations.
6. Gladdening Hotar, seasonable offerer, of bright radiance, with far-radiant goods,
Agni do I reverently invoke—he will listen—

7. The age-old Hotar to be reverently invoked, enjoyable Agni, who has a poet's purpose,
the full glory of the ceremonies.
8. O best of the Aṅgirases, enjoying these oblations here in due order,
Agni, conduct the sacrifice at the proper season.
9. When you have been kindled, o comrade with flaming flame, convey here
the divine race, as the attentive one.

10. The inspired poet, Hotar without deceit, whose beacon is smoke, with far-radiant goods,
the beacon of the sacrifices do we implore:
11. "Agni, protect us. (Burn), god, against those who do harm.
Split hatred, o might-made one."
12. Agni beautifying his own body with an age-old thought,
the sage poet is strengthened by the inspired poet.

13. I call the child of nourishment, pure-flamed Agni,
here to this sacrifice of good ceremony.
14. You who have the might of Mitra, o Agni, with your flaming flame
sit here on our ritual grass along with the gods.
15. The mortal who serves god Agni in his own house,
just for that man will he bring goods to light.

16. Agni is the head, the peak of heaven; this (Agni) here is lord of the earth.
He quickens the spawn of the waters.
17. Your flaming flames rise up as they flash, Agni,
your lights, your beams.
18. Because you hold sway over a choice gift, Agni, as lord of the sun,
might I, your praiser, be in your shelter.

19. You, Agni, do those of inspired thought, you do they spur on with their insights.
Let our hymns strengthen you.

20. Of the undeceivable, self-empowered messenger who is always crackling—
of Agni would we choose the comradeship.
21. Agni, best possessor of flaming commandments, flaming inspired poet, flaming sage poet,
flaming he shines when he is bepoured.

22. And let my visionary thoughts, let my hymns strengthen you at all times.
Agni, take cognizance of our comradeship.
23. If I were you, Agni, or you were me,
your hopes would come true here.
24. Because you are surely the good lord of goods, Agni, with far-radiant goods,
may we be in your benevolence.

25. Agni, like rivers to the sea, to you of steadfast commandments
do our hymns go bellowing.
26. The youthful clanlord, the sage poet, omnivorous, pulsing with much excitement—
Agni do I beautify with my thoughts.
27. To the charioteer of the sacrifices, sharp-fanged, staunch,
would we make haste with praises—to Agni.

28. Let this singer here abide in you, comrade Agni.
To him be merciful, o pure one.
29. For you are a clever companion at table, always wakeful like an inspired poet.
Agni, you will give light (all the way up) to heaven.
30. Agni, in the face of difficult passages, in the face of insults, o sage poet,
lengthen our lifetime, o good one.

VIII.45 (665) Indra (except 1: Agni and Indra)

Triśoka Kāṇva
42 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

The hymn begins and ends with a tṛca marked by a refrain (vss. 1–3 and 40–42). The tṛca division can otherwise be faint, and in several instances seems to contravene groupings of verse by content (see esp. vss. 36–39). The Anukramaṇī attributes the hymn to a certain Triśoka, but this name has probably been plucked from verse 30.

The first two verses establish a ritual mise-en-scène, but we quickly move into the martial and competitive mode that prevails in most of the rest of this long hymn.

Familiar chords are struck: Indra is exhorted to destroy enemies in various ferocious ways (e.g., vs. 8) and to parcel out their goods to us (e.g., vs. 15), to drink our soma and aid our efforts (e.g., vs. 14), and to give us rich gifts (e.g., vs. 12), and he is praised for his past deeds (see esp. vss. 25–30).

But the hymn also has several unusual features. The poet expresses a remarkable degree of apprehension about the exercise of Indra's powers and fear that they may be turned against him and his comrades. Although a certain amount of such sentiment (as in the beginning of vs. 10) is not rare in Indra hymns, the sequence of verses 31–35, which begins with a plea to Indra *not* to do what he has in mind and seeks to accomplish, a sharp reversal of the usual request, depicts men in fear of being Indra's targets—or perhaps even just of witnessing his terrifying hyper-power (see vss. 32, 35)—and begging for his mercy. Already in verse 19 they expressed worry about their shaky relationship with Indra, and the poet speaks of their "offenses" in verse 34, a term more at home in an Ādityan context.

Even more striking are two snatches of dialogue, which bookend the hymn: the first two verses of the second tṛca (vss. 4–5) and the first two verses of the penultimate tṛca (vss. 37–38). In the first pair the just-born Indra takes up a bow and asks his mother about potential enemies, and she replies with what appears to be a proverbial expression assuring him of his ultimate victory. (This scene has a close parallel in VIII.77.1–2.) In verses 37–38 it seems (the verses are quite obscure and uncontextualized) that Indra and the Maruts exchange slangy insults: in 37 Indra reproaches the Maruts (not named but identified by one of their epithets) for not honoring their partnership by even thinking of abandoning him, while they reply in 38 by suggesting that he should have thought of that before, when he was hogging the soma. The unspoken context is the well-known episode when all the gods *but* the Maruts abandon Indra before the Vṛtra battle (see, e.g., VIII.96.7, using some of the same vocabulary), and the Maruts later demand from Indra a share in the soma sacrifice because they stood by him (see especially the dialogue hymn I.165). This intriguingly deracinated exchange seems to have been suggested to the poet by verse 36, in which he himself hopes not to be deprived of a comrade. If Indra himself could find himself deserted by his friends, how much more conceivable such a situation is for a mere mortal. This theme of comradeship was announced in the refrain to the first tṛca (vss. 1–3) and arises several times elsewhere in the hymn (vss. 16, 18).

Though the hymn does not have a clear structure—and its length would have made such a structure difficult to apprehend in a performance situation—the themes and concerns that keep surfacing give some sense of unity, and the two little dialogues at the two ends of the hymn grab the attention.

1. Those who kindle the fire and strew the ritual grass in due order,
of whom Indra is the youthful comrade,
2. Lofty is their kindling wood, abundant their recitation, broad their sacrificial post,
of whom Indra is the youthful comrade.

3. Unembattled himself, in battle the champion drives the troop along with his warriors,
of whom Indra is the youthful comrade.

4. The Vṛtra-smiter took the Bunda-bow; just born, he asked his mother:
"Which ones are powerful; which ones are famed?"
5. She, the strong one [/Śavasī], replied to you: "Like a wasp at a mountain he will fight,
who desires rivalry with you."
6. And you, o bounteous one—listen: "Who wishes (something) of you, for that you exert your will.
What you will make firm, that is firm."

7. When the setter of contests drives to the contest in search of good horses, Indra
is the best charioteer of charioteers.
8. Rip apart all attackers, mace-bearer, as if into (a million) pieces.
Become the one who most receives our praises.
9. Let Indra set *our* chariot in front to win,
he whom injuries do not injure.

10. May we avoid your hatred (and be) fit for you to give to, able one.
May we go to (prizes) consisting of cattle, Indra—
11. O possessor of the (pressing) stone, (the soma drops), though they move deliberately, are bringing horses and hundreds of cattle,
are strengthening and faultless.
12. For day after day your upright liberal spirit
is ready to give thousands, hundreds to the singers.

13. For we know you as winner of spoils, Indra, bursting even into the fastnesses,
like one breaking into a household.
14. Let the drops exhilarate you, as lead horse, o sage poet, audacious one,
when we beg you for a niggard:
15. The impious rich man who has neglected to give to you bounteously,
bring his possessions here to us.

16. These comrades here, possessing the soma, watch out for you, Indra,
as those who have flourishing (cattle) watch out for their livestock.
17. And you, who are not deaf but have listening ears,
do we call here from afar for help.
18. When you should hear this call here, you should do (a deed) difficult to forget, and then
you would become our most intimate friend.

19. For even though we've thought that we've been going a wayward course to you,
still become for us a giver of cows, Indra.
20. As elderly men grasp a staff, we have grasped hold of you, lord of strength.
We want you in our seat.
21. Sing a praise song to Indra, the warrior of much manliness,
whom none obstruct in battle.

22. When it has been pressed, I set you loose on the pressed (soma) to drink it, o bull.
Become satiated; come through to exhilaration.
23. Let not the greedy dolts, let not the deriders deceive you.
Do not cherish those who hate the sacred formulation.
24. Here let the (soma drinks) with their profusion of cows [=milk] exhilarate you to generosity.
Drink a lake, as a buffalo does.

25. Those (deeds) that the Vṛtra-smiter set in motion afar, both the old ones and the new,
proclaim these at the assemblies:
26. Indra drank the pressed (soma) of Kadrū for that which possesses a thousand-arms [=battle?].
Then he displayed his own masculine power.
27. This is real: having obtained at Turvaśa's and Yadu's what is not to be spurned [=soma],
he came through to victory by his labor.

28. I laud him to you as the surpassing one, as driller of the bovine prize for the peoples,
and as one common (to all)—
29. As the master of the Ṛbhus, not to be obstructed, as the strengthener of the son of Tugra [=Bhujyu] (do I laud him) in solemn words
when the soma is pressed—Indra!
30. Who cut apart the broad, womblike mountain for Triśoka,
as a way for the cows to go forth.

31. What you take on, have in mind, and, becoming exhilarated, set out to accomplish,
don't do that, Indra. Have mercy!
32. For even a paltry deed of one such as you is famed on earth.
Let your mind go (to us?), Indra.
33. Just yours will be these glorifications and encomia,
when, Indra, you will be merciful to us.

34. Don't smite us at a single offense, nor at two or three,
nor at many, o champion.
35. For I am afraid of one such as you—powerful, shattering,
wondrous, vanquishing with his attack.
36. Let me not find the lack of a comrade, nor of a son, o you of
outstanding goods.
Let your mind be turned here.

37. [Indra to Maruts:] "You young bucks—who, (as if) unpaired, has said,
as comrade to comrade,
'I will leave (you)'? Who retreats from us?"
38. [Maruts to Indra:] "Hey bull. So—when (the soma) was pressed, being
insatiable you consumed a lot,
sashaying around the lower depths like a guy with 'the dog-killer' [=the
winning throw at dice]."
39. I hold onto these two fallow bays of yours, yoked by speech, along with
their chariot,
so that you will give to the formulators.

40. Split off all hatreds; parry oppressions. Smite the slighters.
The craved good thing—bring that here.
41. What is in a firm place, what in a solid place, Indra, what has been
borne away into a deep place—
the craved good thing—bring that here.
42. The abundance given by you that the whole people of Manu
will know—
the craved good thing—bring that here.

VIII.46 (666) Indra (1–20), Dānastuti (21–24), Vāyu (25–28), Dānastuti (29–33)

Vaśa Aśvya
33 verses: a variety of lyric meters combining 8- and 12- and 4-syllable pādas

This hymn has been called the most metrically varied hymn in the Ṛgveda: it contains verses of nearly twenty different meters, although all the verses that allow analysis appear to be made up of the standard building blocks of eight-, twelve-, and four-syllable pādas in various combinations. (Some irresolvable irregularities remain.) For the most part, the verses are grouped into two-verse pairs (anomalous pragāthas), but the hymn begins with a tṛca (vss. 1–3), and the metrically messy verses 14–16 also appear to form a tṛca. The two dānastuti sections (vss. 21–24 and 29–33), broken by two pragāthas to Vāyu, show no internal metrical structure. The meter is discussed by Oldenberg with his characteristic acuity both in the *Prolegomena* (1888: 109–10) and in the *Noten*.

The hymn is miscellaneous in content as well. It begins and continues for some time as a fairly standard Indra hymn, insistently focused on begging Indra for gifts of all sorts. The Indra section continues through verse 20, but becomes more and more problematic, with metrical and syntactic difficulties reinforcing each other. Verses 14–16 are metrically almost unanalyzable, and they consist in great part of syntactic fragments the relationships among which are difficult to construct. Verse 17 (paired in a pragātha with 18) equally resists metrical and exegetical certainty, but introduces the Maruts as a counterweight to Indra; in verse 18 we return to more rational metrical structure and, to some degree, analyzable syntax. The last two verses of the Indra section (19–20) are fairly straightforward and bring the praise of Indra to a conclusion with an explosion of adjectives (the first hemistich of 20 is also made entirely of vocatives).

The remaining thirteen verses of the hymn consist of three almost equal parts: two dānastutis (vss. 21–24, 29–33), interrupted by a dānastuti-tinged section addressed to the wind god Vāyu, who participates in the Morning Pressing, when the priestly gifts are distributed. Both dānastutis mention extravagant numbers of livestock. In the first the poet Vaśa Aśvya mentions himself (vs. 21) and his patron Pṛthuśravas Kānita (vss. 21, 24); the final verse (24) of this first dānastuti has a distinctly summary tone and clearly spells out the cause-and-effect relation between gifts and fame. The second dānastuti mentions a more various set of patrons, and the poet names himself in the final verse (33), as a "great maiden," clearly his favorite gift, is brought toward him. The diction and style of both dānastutis is straightforward; they lack the sly puns and clever insult-as-praise and praise-as-insult that characterize many dānastutis and seem intent only on counting up the spoils. The four intervening verses (25–28) describes Vāyu's dawn journey to the sacrifice, but it is made clear that his purpose there is to give, or (vs. 27) to motivate the patron to give, to the poet.

1. To such a one as you, Indra, you leader with many goods,
do we belong, you mounter of the fallow bays.
2. For we know you, possessor of the stone, as real, as giver of
refreshments;
we know you as giver of riches—
3. You, of a hundred forms of help and a hundred resolves, whose
greatness
the bards hymn with hymns.

4. That mortal has good guidance whom the Maruts, whom Aryaman
and Mitra protect—those without deceit.
5. Acquiring (wealth) in cows and horses and an abundance of heroes,
impelled by the Ādityas, he flares up
with much craved wealth always.

6. We beseech this Indra for a gift, him swelling with strength, fearless—
we beseech the lord of wealth for wealth.

7. For in him exist all fearless forms of help altogether.
Let the spans convey him hither, who has many goods; let the fallow bays convey him to the pressed (soma) for exhilaration.

8. Your exhilaration, which is worthy to be chosen, which is the most Vṛtra-smiting, o Indra,
which with superior men takes the sun, which is difficult to surpass in battles—
9. Which, difficult to surpass, worthy of fame, is the overcomer in the prize-contests, o you who grant all wishes—
you, o strongest good one—come here to our pressings. May we go to a pen full of cows.

10. At our desire for cows, for horses, and for chariots, (now) just as before,
create wide space for us, you greatly great one.
11. For I do not find a limit to your generosity in any way, o champion.
Show favor to us, bounteous possessor of the stone, even now. You have aided our poetic insights with your prizes.

12. The lofty one who makes his comrade famous, he, praised by many, knows all the races.
Through the human lifespans they all call on him, on Indra the powerful, with their offering ladles extended.
13. He will become our helper in the prize-contests—he of many goods, the one who stands in front, the bounteous Vṛtra-smiter.

14. Sing to the hero amid the raptures of the stalk; with a great hymn (sing) to the discriminating one,
Indra by name, worthy of fame, capable like speech.
15. (You are by nature) one who gives a legacy to the body [=a son], who gives goods, who gives a prizewinner in the prize-contests, o much invoked one—
now then (do so)!
16. (Sing to him) who has control of all goods, who also, when he is victorious, has control of this form (of his?),
(and has control) over those who yearn (for him). Now then!

17. We shall praise you great ones [=Maruts] for the rewarder fit for nourishment, who comes fittingly, who comes regularly [=Indra].
Through the sacrifices and the hymns of all the peoples of Manu, you [=Indra] are likely to attain (the favor) of the Maruts.
I sing to you reverently with a hymn.
18. Those who launch themselves in flight on their drives along the backs of the mountains—
the sacrifice of those greatly noisy ones, the favor of those powerfully noisy ones (you are likely to attain) while the ceremony is pro(ceeding).

19. O strongest Indra, bring here the shatterer of bad thoughts,
(namely) wealth to be harnessed for us, o you who stir thought—preeminent (wealth), o you who stir thought.
20. O winner, good winner, powerful, brilliant, most brilliant, liberal-spirited,
sovereign king, (bring wealth) victorious through victory,
victory-winning, enjoyable, foremost at the prize-contests.

21. Let him come here—any non-god who has taken as great a gift
as Vaśa Aśvya has taken from Pṛthuśravas Kānita at the dawning of this (dawn) here.
22. I have won sixty thousands in equine property, myriads, twenty hundreds of camels,
ten hundreds of dusky mares, ten of those with three red spots, ten thousands of cows.
23. Ten dusky (stallions), following wealth to fulfillment, straight-tailed, swift,
skittish, have turned the felly homeward.
24. These are the gifts of Pṛthuśravas Kānita, the very generous.
In giving a golden chariot, he has become the most bounteous patron.
He has made his fame the highest.

25. Vāyu, drive here to us for the extension and the spread (of our line) to be great and for bounty.
For we have performed (a sacrifice) for you, for you to give much, to give greatly all at once.
26. As the one who drives here with his horses at the breaking of the day—with the thrice seven seventies—
(invigorated) with these soma drinks by the soma-pressers, (be ready) to give, you soma-drinker, drinker of the clear purified (soma).

27. The one of good resolve who by his breath invigorated just this man here, to give something brilliant to me
in the axle made of *araṭu* wood, in the presence of Nahuṣa, who is a good performer (of rituals) for (a god) who performs even better,
28. You who are an independent king, in a wondrous form worthy of praise and bathed in ghee, o Vāyu—
this drive (of yours), horse-impelled, dust-impelled, dog-impelled, pro(ceeds). Here it is now!

29. Now then, I have won something dear to the vigorous one, sixty thousand
(geldings, which are) just like stallions.
30. Like cattle to their herd, the geldings approach, the geldings approach me.
31. Then when in a roving band [=caravan] a hundred camels roared,
then (I took) twenty hundreds from the Śvitnas.

32. I, the inspired poet, took a hundred from Balbūtha Tarukṣa the Dāsa.
These are your peoples here, Vāyu. With Indra as protector they become exhilarated; with the gods as protectors they become exhilarated.
33. And now this great maiden, facing Vaśa Aśvya,
with bright ornaments upon her, is led forth.

VIII.47 (667) Ādityas

Trita Āptya
18 verses: mahāpaṅkti

The first two-thirds of this hymn (through vs. 12) beg the Ādityas for general help and protection from generic evils—the nonspecific nature of what is requested underlined by the rather redundantly phrased refrain. The refrain continues through the last third of the hymn (vss. 13–18), but in the non-refrain portions the focus narrows—to the elimination of the "bad dream," which is sent far away to the shadowy figure called Trita Āptya. Nothing else in the scraps of mythology we know about Trita Āptya explains why he should be the scapegoated recipient of our nightmares, much less why he would make them into body ornaments (vs. 15) or use them as food and work (vs. 16). The agent who removes the bad dream to Trita is Dawn (vss. 14–16, 18), whose participation is easier to understand—as anyone knows who has experienced the relief of waking in the morning to discover that the nightmares just experienced were not real.

1. Great is the help, of (all of) you who are great, for the pious man, o Varuṇa and Mitra.
Whomever you protect from deceit, o Ādityas, evil will not reach him.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
2. You know how to make evils stay away, o gods, o Ādityas.
Like birds their wings, spread your shelter out above us.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
3. Spread that shelter out over us, like birds their wings.
We revere all things providing defense, o you who possess all possessions.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
4. Mankind—to which the attentive ones gave peaceful dwelling and livelihood—
over all its wealth do these Ādityas hold sway.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
5. Evils will avoid us, as charioteers avoid hard places.
Might we be in the shelter of Indra and the help of the Ādityas.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.

6. It is only by a crooked course that in such a way a man becomes lost to what is given by you.
O gods, o Ādityas, it's not a trifle that he obtained from you—the man whom you spurred on.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
7. Negligence, sharp or weighty, will never beset him
to whom you, Ādityas, have given broad shelter.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
8. We abide in you, o gods, like fighters in armor.
You—deliver us from a great offense; you—from a small one.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
9. Let Aditi deliver us; let Aditi spread her shelter—
the mother of rich Mitra, of Aryaman and Varuṇa.
–Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
10. That sheltering shelter, o gods, beneficial and without damage,
providing threefold defense—spread that out over us.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
11. For you, o Ādityas, gaze down (on us), like spies from a hillside.
You will lead us along an easy way like steeds to an easy ford.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
12. There is no benefit for the demonic here, for him to descend and to come near.
There is benefit for the milk-giving cow and for the hero seeking fame.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
13. Whatever is ill-done in the open, whatever in secret, o gods,
all that set on Trita Āptya, far away from us.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
14. The bad dream in the cattle and the one in us, o Daughter of Heaven—
carry it away to Trita Āptya, o far-radiant one.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
15. He will make (it) his neck ornament or his garland, o Daughter of Heaven—
the whole bad dream we consign to Trita Āptya.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
16. To the one who has it as his food and as his work, to the one reverently approaching it as his portion—
to Trita and to Dvita, o Dawn, carry the bad dream.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
17. Just as we bring back a sixteenth, then an eighth, then the (whole) debt,
even so we bring the whole bad dream to Āptya.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.

18. We have conquered today and we have won; we have become free of blame.
O Dawn, the bad dream which we have feared, let (dawn) dawn it away.
– Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.

VIII.48 (668) Soma

Pragātha Kaṇva
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 5

This well-known and frequently translated hymn is one of the very few dedicated to Soma outside of the IXth Maṇḍala, and as such does not concern "self-purifying" Soma (Soma Pavamāna), the subject of that maṇḍala. The preparation of soma is not treated here, save for a single reference (vs. 7) to it as "pressed." Instead the emphasis is on soma's effects, "when drunk" (*pītá* vss. 4, 5, 10, 12), on the drinker. The immediate effect is euphoria; as in the famous exultant boast in verse 3 "we have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods." The soma produces a sense of space and boundlessness (vss. 1, 2, 5) while, paradoxically, being confined in the drinker's body (vss. 2, 9, 10) and holding this body together (vs. 5). The temporal equivalent of this spatial expansion is the wish constantly expressed to "lengthen our lifetime" (vss. 4, 7, 10, 11). Soma is thus characterized by vitality, or life force, which he also confers on the drinker: the first and last verses of the hymn contain this signature word *váyas*.

The mood in the second half of the hymn darkens slightly. Though the poet still sees Soma as his protector and kindly comrade, he senses the threats that cause him to need that protection—threats from outside (vs. 8), from his own imperfect actions (vs. 9), and even from soma itself (vs. 10). Though he ultimately pronounces the threats vanquished (vs. 11), the mood of sheer exuberance has been broken.

The final few verses (12–14) take a more ritual turn, with our ceremonial dedication of an oblation to soma, in his connection with the forefathers (who themselves receive soma, as is made clear elsewhere). The ancestor cult thus briefly surfaces here, and the emphasis throughout the hymn on lengthening our lifetimes (on earth) may provide a counterpoint to the ritually shaped afterlife inhabited by our ancestors.

1. I of good wisdom have partaken of the vitality of the sweet drink, which is rich in purpose and excellent at finding wide space,
which all the gods and mortals, calling it honey, converge upon.
2. When you have gone within, you will become Aditi [/boundlessness], appeaser of divine wrath.
Drop, enjoying the comradeship of Indra, like an obedient mare following the chariot-pole, you should follow riches to fulfillment.

3. We have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods.
What can hostility do to us now, and what the malice of a mortal, o immortal one?
4. Become weal for our heart when drunk, o drop, very kindly, like a father to a son,
like a comrade to a comrade, you who are widely proclaimed as insightful. Lengthen our lifetime, for us to live, Soma.
5. These glorious (drops), when drunk, seek wide space. As cows [=leather straps] do a chariot, it [=soma] knots (me) together in my joints.
Let the drops guard me from my foot slipping, and let them keep me away from lameness.
6. You have enflamed me like a churned fire. Make us conspicuous; make us better off,
for now in the exhilaration of you, Soma, I think of myself as a rich man. I shall advance to prosperity.
7. With a vigorous mind we would take a share of you when pressed, as of ancestral wealth.
King Soma, lengthen our lifetimes, like the sun the dawning days.
8. King Soma, be merciful to us with well-being. We are under your commandment: know this.
Potency and battle fervor are on the rise, o drop. Don't hand us over (to the battle fervor) of the stranger, at his wish.
9. For as protector of our body, Soma, you have settled down in every limb, having your eyes on men.
If we will confound your commandments, be merciful to us, as our good comrade, all the more, o god.
10. Might I be accompanied by a tender-hearted comrade, who would not harm me when it has been drunk, o possessor of fallow bay horses.
This soma here that has been deposited in us—for it I go to Indra to lengthen our lifetime.
11. These famines and diseases have gone off. Those allied to darkness have shied away; they have become afraid.
Soma has mounted us to his full extent. We have gone to where they lengthen lifetime.
12. O forefathers, the drop that, once drunk, entered into our hearts, the immortal into the mortals,
to this Soma we would do ceremonial honor with an oblation. May we be in his mercy and good grace.
13. You, Soma, coming to agreement with the forefathers, extend through heaven and earth.
To you, drop, we would do ceremonial honor with an oblation. May we be lords of riches.

14. Protector Gods, speak on our behalf. Let sleep not master us, nor mumbling.
    May we, always dear to Soma, possessed of good heroes, announce the ceremonial honor.
15. You, o Soma, confer vitality on us on all sides; you, as finder of the sun, possessing the eye of men—enter us.
    You, o drop, along with your help—protect us from behind and also from in front.

Vālakhilya Hymns

The following eleven hymns (VIII.49–59) are known as the Vālakhilya hymns. These are apocryphal or, in Geldner's felicitous description, "half-apocryphal" (*halbapokryph*). A number of *khilāni* or apocrypha were transmitted in the Ṛgvedic tradition, but only these eleven (or, in some other reported recensions, somewhat fewer) were inserted into and transmitted within the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā itself, as well as in the khilāni collections. Moreover, these eleven were transmitted with accents and were treated in the Padapāṭha, the Anukramaṇī (save for the tenth, VIII.58), and so forth, though they were not commented on by Sāyaṇa in his Ṛgvedic commentary. In our Ṛgveda recension, the Śākalya, they were inserted between the sixth and seventh anuvākas of VIII, though they are reported to appear elsewhere in other recensions, not always in a single group. The Grassmann numbers, 1018–1028, reflect the status of these hymns as additions to the original saṃhitā.

The text of these hymns is in general less well transmitted than the rest of the Ṛgveda, and the hymns themselves sometimes have the air of a school exercise. Notable in this connection is the fact that the first eight hymns proceed in pairs, each pair dedicated to the same divinity (except for a few verses in the third pair, VIII.53–54) and containing the same number of verses in the same meter (except for a few verses in the last pair, VIII.55–56). Moreover, the first pair (VIII.49–50) and, to a much lesser extent, the second pair (VIII.51–52) follow the same model, verse by verse, often using identical or near identical vocabulary but varying grammar, or else employing transparent lexical substitution but keeping the grammar the same, and one can imagine that the two hymns represent separate realizations of a set pedagogical task. However, whatever the reason for their coupling, the pairs afford us interesting insights into the composition of Ṛgvedic hymns. For this reason, as well as the fact that puzzles in one hymn of the pair are sometimes illuminated by the parallel passages in the other, we will comment on the first two sets of paired hymns together.

VIII.49 (1018) Indra

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
10 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 50.

This pair of hymns follows a standard trajectory: the poet exhorts himself to praise Indra for his generosity and his power, and then invites Indra to partake of the soma at his sacrifice, traveling with his fallow bays from wherever he might be. The final pragātha asks Indra to provide the same help and largesse as he has on other occasions at the sacrifices of other, named individuals.

The interest in these two hymns lies in the interplay between the quite strict parallelism in parts of each verse and the freedom with which the poet treats the variable portions. There is no space here for a full catalogue of the correspondences, but a few telling patterns will be noted. First, despite the pervasive parallelism there are no repeated pādas between the hymns. The initial verses of the two hymns (49.1, 50.1) are perhaps the most fully parallel, and in subsequent verses the beginnings and ends of pādas and half lines are more likely to be parallel than the middles, not surprisingly given the salience of these positions. Responsion can take a number of different forms. Frequently there is exact responsion, as in 49/50.6c *udríva vajrinn avatáḥ*... "Like a well-spring full of water, o mace-bearer...." Single-word repetitions will ordinarily take the same metrical position, as in the pāda-final *surā́dhasam* of 49/50.1a. Derivationally different synonyms can correspond, as in 49.5c *svadáyanti* / 50.5c *svádanti*, both "they sweeten"; similarly, to stems belonging to the same root but with different nuances, 49.10c *ásanoḥ* "you won" versus 50.10c *ásiṣāsaḥ* "you sought to win." Or an expanded phrase can take the place of a single word, as in 49.8b *vā́tā iva* "like the winds" versus 50.8b *ójo vā́tasya* "the power of the wind." Synonyms or functionally identical words can respond, as in 49.5b *(d)hiyānó áśvo ná* "being spurred on like a horse" and 50.5b *iyānó átyo ná* "being sped like a steed," where the morphology and word order are identical, but the lexical realization entirely different. Phonological correspondence is not neglected, as in the adjectives in the parallel phrases 49.8a ***ajirā́so*** *hárayaḥ* "nimble fallow bays" and 50.8a *rathi**rā́so** hárayaḥ* "fallow bays fit for the chariot." And of course there is rough semantic parallelism throughout the two hymns, even when there is no lexical, morphological, syntactic, or phonological identity. It is also the case that one of the pair can provide the answer to an obscurity in the other, as in 49.2a where *śatānīkeva* "like (something) with a hundred facets" responds to 50.2a *śatānīkā hetáyaḥ* "missiles with a hundred facets," where the comparandum is explicit.

1. Chant forth to Indra, the very generous, in the way that is known—
   who as a bounteous one possessing many goods—by the thousands, as it were—exerts himself for you singers.
2. Like (a missile) with a hundred facets he advances boldly. He smashes obstacles for the pious man.

Like the juices [=streams] of a much-nourishing mountain his gifts swell forth.

3. The pressed drops that are your exhilarating drinks, o Indra who longs for songs,
fill you, o mace-bearer, like waters a pond, following the accustomed way, for your generosity, o champion.
4. Faultless, (life-)extending, strengthening—the sweetest of honey—drink it,
so that becoming exhilarated, you will by yourself boldly scatter forth (goods) to us like specks (of dust).

5. Being spurred on like a horse by the pressers, (come) at a run to our praise,
which the milk-cows and the gifts sweeten for you, autonomous Indra, among the Kaṇvas.
6. With homage we reverently approach (you) like a powerful hero, the distinguished one dispensing imperishable goods.
Like a wellspring full of water for the one who pours it out, the poetic thoughts flow (for you), Indra, bearer of the mace.

7. Whether now (you are) either at (another's) sacrifice or (elsewhere) on the earth,
from there come here to our sacrifice with your swift (horses), you of great thought, powerful with your powerful (ones).
8. Nimble are your fallow bays, which are swift and overpowering like the winds,
with which you speed around the progeny of Manu, with which (you speed around) the whole (world), (for it) to see the sun.

9. We beg for such great cattle-bringing benevolence of yours, Indra,
as when you helped Medhyātithi, o bounteous one, as when (you helped) Nīpātithi to spoils—
10. Just as at Kaṇva's, at Trasadasyu's, o bounteous one, as at Paktha Daśavraja's,
just as at Gośarya Ṛjiśvan's, Indra, you won (wealth) in cattle and gold.

VIII.50 (1019) Indra

Puṣṭigu Kāṇva
10 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 49.

1. Chant forth to the famed, very generous, able one for his dominance,
who grants to the presser and to the praiser desirable goods, by the thousands as it were.

2. His missiles with a hundred facets are difficult to overcome, the great projectiles of Indra.
Like a beneficial mountain he swells among the bounteous ones when the pressed (soma drinks) have exhilarated him.

3. When the pressed drops have exhilarated the dear one,
like waters my pressing has been deposited (in you), good one, (and it will be) like milking cows for the pious.
4. Your [=poets'] thoughts of honey flow to the faultless (soma), which is calling for help.
The drops, calling on you [=Indra], good one, have been set among the praisers.

5. Being sped like a steed, he [=Indra] streams to our soma, good at the ceremony,
which our greetings sweeten for you, self-giving one. At Paura's you take pleasure in the invocation.
6. (Chant) forth to the powerful hero, the discriminating one who gains the stakes, the distinguished one of great generosity.
Like a wellspring full of water, mace-bearer, you always swell goods for the pious man.

7. Whether now (you are) at a distance either on earth or in heaven,
hitching up with your fallow bays, o Indra of great thought, come here, lofty with your lofty (horses)—
8. Fit for the chariot are your fallow bays, which, unfailing, cross over the power of the wind,
with which you made the Dasyu heed because of Manu, with which you speed around the sun.

9. Might we know such help of yours anew, o champion,
as when you helped Etaśa when the stake was to be decided, as (you helped) Vaśa at Daśavraja's.
10. Just as at Kaṇva's, o bounteous one, at the ritual offering, at the ceremony, beside (Agni), the domestic leader of long counsel,
just as at Gośarya's you sought winnings, you possessor of the stone, at my side (win) a cowpen splendid with fallow bays.

VIII.51 (1020) Indra

Śruṣṭigu Kāṇva
10 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 52.

By contrast to VIII.49–50, the parallelism of these two hymns is quite muted and surfaces only occasionally. Not only are strict responsions rare, but the development of the thought in each hymn is quite distinct, though both focus on Indra as

generous giver. The correspondence between the two hymns is clearest at the beginning: both hymns have almost identical initial verses, save for the personal names of the human hosts. These verses also have the same structure as the final verses of VIII.49–50.10. There is also some verbal responsion in the beginning of verses 3 and 5, throughout much of verse 6, and at the beginning of verse 7, and there are also correspondences that cross verse lines, for instance, 51.6c=52.4c *táṃ tvā vayám*... "we you...," with the continuation of that pāda (51.6c) *maghavann indra girvaṇaḥ* "o bounteous Indra who longs for songs" matched in 52.8a.

As just noted, both hymns are primarily concerned to stimulate Indra to generosity. In VIII.51 are interspersed several obscure references to unknown sagas: verse 2 with the old, prone Praskaṇva set upright (Praskaṇva figures also in nearby VIII.54.8, but only as beneficiary of Indra's largesse, and he is the poet to whom I.44–50 as well as VIII.49, the first Vālakhilya hymn, are attributed) and Indra's defeat of Krivi (vs. 8). And in verses 4 and 8, in identical language, an apparently miraculous birth follows ritual and cosmogonic activity. One of these acts is the chanting of a "seven-headed, threefold chant in the highest footstep" (vs. 4), and a stripped-down version of the same phrase, "they chanted the chant" is found in the final verse (10), with the current poets as subject, thus implicitly attributing cosmogonic powers to the poets of today.

The construction of VIII.52 is far less orderly than that of 51. It is characterized by subordinate clauses that lack main clauses (e.g., vss. 2, 3), lack of grammatical agreement between apparently coreferential entities (e.g., sg. "whose" picked up by "we" in vs. 4; similar disharmony in vs. 8), and a general looseness of structure especially in the verses that lack all responsion to 51. If this was a school exercise, perhaps it was an unsuccessful one.

1. Just as at Manu Sāṃvaraṇi's you drank pressed soma, Indra,
   and at Nīpātithi's, at Medhyātithi's, (do so) at Puṣṭigu's, at Śruṣṭigu's, bounteous one.
2. Pārṣadvāṇa made old Praskaṇva, who was lying down, sit upright together (with him, at a sacrificial session?).
   The seer sought to win thousands of cattle; Dasyave Vṛka was aided by you.
3. He who cannot get enough of hymns, who is the observant stimulator of seers,
   to this Indra speak with a newer thought, to give sustenance to him like a man greedy for food.
4. He for whom they chanted the seven-headed, threefold chant in the highest footstep,
   that one made all these worlds cry out. Right after that his masculine nature was born.
5. He who is the giver of goods to us, that Indra we invoke,
   for we know his ever newer favor. Might we go to a pen full of cattle.

6. He to whom you exert yourself to give, o good one, that one achieves the thriving of wealth.
   We, who have pressed (the soma), invoke you, o bounteous Indra who longs for songs.
7. Never are you a barren cow, nor, Indra, do you go dry for the pious man.
   Over and over, more and more, the gift coming from you, the god, becomes engorged.
8. He who attained Krivi by his strength, while making Śuṣṇa heed with his murderous weapons,
   just when he propped up yonder heaven as he spread it out, right after that the earth dweller was born.
9. You to whom every Ārya here belongs, every Dāsa, every treasure-guarding stranger,
   even across (all these) (come) to the Arya Ruśama Parīru. There there is wealth anointed just for you.
10. The eager inspired poets have chanted a honeyed, ghee-dripping chant.
    Among us wealth spreads out and bullish power; among us are the drops being pressed.

VIII.52 (1021) Indra

Āyu Kāṇva
10 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 51.

1. Just as at Manu Vivasvant's you drank pressed soma, able one,
   just as at Trita's you will enjoy the poem, Indra, (even so) at Āyu's you bring yourself to exhilaration—
2. (Just as) at Pṛṣadhra's, at Medhya's, at Mātariśvan's, Indra, you became exhilarated on the (soma) being pressed,
   just as at Daśasipra's, at Daśoṇya's, at Syūmaraśmi's, at Ṛjūnas' (you drank) the soma.
3. He who took as his own the hymns, who boldly drank the soma,
   for whom Viṣṇu strode his three steps, according to the institutes of their alliance...
4. In whose praises, Indra, you will take pleasure when the prize (is set), you prizewinner of a hundred resolves...
   Eager for fame, we call to you, as milkers call on a cow who gives good milk.

5. Who is a giver to us, he is our father—great, powerful, performing the master's part.
   Even without our begging, let the powerful bounteous one who possesses many goods give to us of cow and horse.
6. He to whom you are ready to give, o good one, that one spurs the thriving of wealth.
   Seeking goods, with praises we call on the lord of goods possessing a hundred resolves: Indra.

7. Never do you stay away; you protect both breeds [=gods and men].
   O fourth Āditya, the invocation destined for you, for Indra, has mounted to the immortal (world?) in heaven.
8. For whatever pious one, o bounteous Indra who long for songs, you muster your abilities, able one—
   listen to *our* songs and lovely praise, o good one, to *our* call, like that of the Kaṇvas.

9. The age-old thought has been expressed as praise. Speak the sacred formulation to Indra.
   Many lofty (songs) of truth have roared; the wise thoughts of the praiser have been released.
10. Indra shook together lofty riches, together the two opponents [=Heaven and Earth], together the sun.
    Together the gleaming pure soma-drinks, together those mixed with milk, have exhilarated Indra.

VIII.53 (1022) Indra

Medhya Kāṇva
8 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas.

A fairly conventional Indra hymn, which begins with a string of superlatives applied to Indra and praise for his previous deeds (vss. 1–2) and then proceeds to the invitation to the soma sacrifice (vss. 3–4). The poet asks Indra for the usual benefits: wealth and aid, but he is especially concerned with winning in prize-contests and battle raids. See especially verses 6–8.

1. You, the best of bounteous ones and most preeminent of bulls,
   best stronghold-splitter, o bounteous Indra, finder of cows, lord of wealth do we beseech for wealth.
2. You who set Āyu, Kutsa, Atithigva to shaking, while growing stronger every day,
   you do we invoke, seeking prizes—you of the fallow bay horses, possessing a hundred resolves.

3. Let the stones pour out the honey's juice of all of us—
   the drops that have been pressed in the distance among (other) peoples, and those that have been pressed nearby.
4. Smash all hatreds and bring them low. Let all (of us) win goods.
   Even among the Śīṣṭas there are invigorating shoots for you, where you become sated on soma.

5. Indra, come closer here with your help that provides secure wisdom—
   here, most wealful one with your most wealful superior powers, here, friendly one with your friendly powers.
6. Make the lord of the settlements surpassing in the contest, governing all domains, sharer in offspring.
   With your powers lengthen (the lifetime of those) who, equipped with solemn words, purify your resolve following the proper order,

7. (Your resolve) to help which best brings success. Might we be yours in the bouts.
   May we consider ourselves winners through our libations and invocations to the gods.
8. For I, seeking the prize, enter the contest for the sacred formulation always with your help, you of the fallow bays.
   Seeking horses, seeking cows, I pledge myself just to you, at the beginning of raids.

VIII.54 (1023) Indra (1–2, 5–8), All Gods (3–4)

Mātariśvan Kāṇva
8 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Despite being technically twinned with VIII.53, this hymn has little in common with its predecessor. However, verse 6 not only shares the concern for winning that characterized the previous hymn, but also shares some of its phraseology: it begins with a compound of *áji* "contest" and two compounds with *-pati* "lord," closely paralleling VIII.53.6a, and much of the second half of the verse matches the second half of VIII.53.7.

The three pragāthas dedicated to Indra (vss. 1–2, 5–6, 7–8) are interrupted by one to the All Gods, an elementary listing of various groups of gods (vs. 3) and individual gods and natural forces (vs. 4). The verses to Indra beg him to display his generosity.

1. This heroic deed of yours, Indra, the bards sing with songs.
   Beating time they furthered the nourishment dripping with ghee. The Pauras approach with their visionary thoughts.

2. With their good (ritual) work they approach Indra for help—they at whose pressings you reach exhilaration.
   Just as you became exhilarated at Saṃvarta's, at Kṛśa's, just so become exhilarated among us.

3. All you gods joined in revelry, come here to us.
   The Vasus, the Rudras will come here to help us. Let the Maruts hear our call.
4. Let Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī aid my calling, let the Seven Streams.
   Let the Waters, the Wind, the Mountains, the Lord of the Forest, let Earth hear my call.

5. What bounteous generosity is yours, most bounteous Indra,
   with that become a feasting companion for our strengthening, become Bhaga for giving, o Vṛtra-smasher.
6. Because just you are lord of contests, lord of men, convey us to the prize, o you of good resolve.
   By their (ritual) pursuit, by their oblations and by their pursuits of the gods, they have become far famed as winners.

7. For the hopes of the stranger come true: in Indra is the lifetime of the peoples.
   Approach us, to help, bounteous one. Milk out swelling refreshment.
8. Might we do honor to you, Indra, with praises. You are ours, you of a hundred resolves.
   Great, sturdy, enduring, unabashed generosity—make it spill down for Praskaṇva.

VIII.55 (1024) Dānastuti of Praskaṇva

Kṛśa Kāṇva
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–2, 4, anuṣṭubh 3, 5

Although the Anukramaṇī identifies this hymn as a dānastuti of Praskaṇva by Kṛśa Kāṇva, as Geldner points out, it is more likely a dānastuti *by* Praskaṇva (mentioned in the last verse of the previous hymn, VIII.54.8) to Dasyave Vṛka, mentioned in the first verse of this one.

This little hymn begins almost like a parody of the great proclamations of great deeds such as I.32: the poet briskly announces that he's finished with his catalogue of Indra's heroic deeds and can now turn to the praise of his patron's generosity. The following two verses (2–3) list a miscellany of gifts, including some odd ones. He then praises the Kaṇvas in general (vs. 4) and returns to the gift in the final verse (5). Its sevenfold nature (if that's what the word means here: it's disputed) is not achieved until the end: the items listed in verses 2–3 add up to six groups, but with the mares of 5ab we reach seven.

1. Since I have just abundantly surveyed the heroism of Indra, your generosity
   will now follow, Dasyave Vṛka.
2. A hundred gleaming white oxen shine like the stars in heaven;
   with their might they seem to prop up heaven itself.
3. A hundred bamboo stalks, a hundred dogs, a hundred tanned hides,
   a hundred ewes with tufts like *balbaja*-grass, four hundred ruddy (cows) (did you give me).
4. You have the gods well on your side, you descendants of Kaṇva. Passing from strength to strength
   like horses they keep pace.
5. From here on they will keep paying tribute to the sevenfold (gift). Great is the praise of (the gift) that lacks nothing.
   When the dusky (mares) dust over the paths, they are not to be encompassed by the eye.

VIII.56 (1025) Dānastuti of Praskaṇva (1–4), Agni and Sūrya (5)

Pṛṣadhra Kāṇva
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–4, paṅkti 5

Like the preceding hymn, this is more likely a dānastuti *by* Praskaṇva of his patron Dasyave Vṛka (once again mentioned in vs. 1) than *of* Praskaṇva. The hymn follows the general pattern of VIII.55: the generosity of the patron is praised in the first verse, and the details of the gifts follow, especially in verses 3 and 4. The latter verse describes the presentation of an adorned female whose identity is disputed, as the readings of the Ṛgveda and the khila collections differ. Some scholars consider her to be Pūtakratu's wife, thus the patron's mother or stepmother, but the daughter of Pūtakratu's wife (following the Ṛgveda reading with some minor adjustment), the patron's sister or half-sister, might make more sense. The final verse (5) to Agni and Sūrya marks the moment of the kindling of the ritual fire at sunrise, when the ritual gifts are distributed.

1. Your immoderate generosity has just been seen, Dasyave Vṛka—
   Your capacious power is like heaven in its extent.
2. To me Dasyave Vṛka, son of Pūtakratu,
   granted ten thousands from his own wealth.
3. A hundred donkeys for me, a hundred wooly ewes,
   a hundred slaves, and garlands beyond that.

4. Then there was also led forth the adorned (daughter) of Pūtakratu's wife [=Dasyave Vṛka's sister]
just as if she belonged to a troop of horses.
5. Agni, the perceptive, has just been perceived, the oblation-conveyor along with his chariot.
Agni shone with his blazing flame, having his own sun aloft, as the Sun shone in heaven.

VIII.57 (1026) Aśvins

Medhya Kāṇva
4 verses: triṣṭubh

This sequence of verses inviting the Aśvins to the soma sacrifice is unremarkable save for a few features. The first verse explicitly establishes the context as the Third Pressing, which, as we have discussed elsewhere, was probably a recent addition to Ṛgvedic ritual. And especially in verse 2 there are insoluble textual problems. Since the verse itself is not terribly interesting in content, the difficulties can safely be left aside here.

1. You two, o gods worthy of the sacrifice, yoked by your age-old purpose, with your chariot
come here to the powerful (soma?), o Nāsatyas, with your skills. You will drink this Third Pressing here.
2. You two have the gods, the thrice eleven, (called upon); those realest of the real have appeared in front.
Taking pleasure in our sacrifice, our pressing, drink the soma, o Aśvins, as ones for whom the fire glows.
3. This deed of yours, o Aśvins, is to be wondered at. The bull of heaven, of the dusky realm, of the earth,
and the thousand chants, which (are performed?) at the quest for cattle—drive up to all those, to drink (the soma).
4. Here is a portion deposited for you, you worthy of the sacrifice; here are hymns, o Nāsatyas—drive up to them.
Drink the honeyed soma among us. Foster the pious man with your skills.

VIII.58 (1027) "Fragment"

Not mentioned in the Anukramaṇī, so without ṛṣi attribution
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This fragment of three verses is not transmitted as a unity in the khila collections, with verses 1–2 and 3 located separately. Verse 3 in fact appears to belong to the

Aśvin hymn VIII.57, with which it fits well: the "left-over" soma it mentions is a standard offering in the Third Pressing treated in VIII.57.

As for the other two verses, Geldner memorably characterizes verse 1 as a riddle without an answer, and verse 2 as an answer without a preceding riddle. This seems persuasive, and the two verses may have been secondarily connected because of the *bahudhā́* "in many forms, in many ways" that appears in the middle of the first pāda of each verse. Proferes argues (2007: 56), again persuasively, that verse 1 inquires about the compact or agreement between the Sacrificer and the priests that is ritually dramatized in the later śrauta system in the ritual of the Tānūnaptra, in which a formal alliance is created among these participants, and he suggests that this verse is a precursor of that later ceremony. Verse 2, on the other hand, has been taken, since Sāyaṇa, as the answer to the riddle posed in X.88.18ab "How many fires and how many suns? How many dawns, and how many waters?" and the tone of this verse is in harmony with the philosophical speculation characteristic of such Xth Maṇḍala hymns.

1. This sacrifice here, which the priests, configuring it in many ways, carry out with one mind,
and the Brahman who was yoked as reciter—what is the Sacrificer's compact there [=with them]?
2. Just one fire is kindled in many forms; just one sun has projected through all.
Just one dawn radiates over this whole (world). In truth just One has developed into this whole (world).
3. Your light-filled, three-wheeled, well-naved chariot, providing a beacon, easy to sit in, bringing abundant valuables,
at whose yoking (Dawn) of bright bounties is born—that I call upon, for you two to drink the "left-over" (soma).

VIII.59 (1028) Indra and Varuṇa

Suparṇa Kāṇva
7 verses: jagatī

This last Vālakhilya hymn presents a number of uncertainties in transmission, and so it is difficult to know whether its sometimes awkward phrasing belonged to the original poem or is the result of flawed transmission. In contrast, the hymn has a rather tight structure, with an apparent omphalos: verses 3 and 5 have a number of lexical correspondences, and in particular they both announce a truth (*satyám*). These correspondences form a ring that defines verse 4, the central verse of the hymn, as the omphalos, as well as containing the "truth" proclaimed in the adjacent verses. All three verses refer to a group, or groups, of seven in riddling fashion. At least the female "seven" in verses 3 and 4—seven voices, seven sisters—can be

identified as the soma-purifying waters, conceived of as the "seven rivers" of Vedic mythology. (They are called "voices" because of the noise they make, just as one of the words for "river," *nadī́*, is derived from the root *nad* "roar," an etymology explicitly recognized by Vedic speakers.) The three heptads of verse 5 may refer to the same streams, multiplied, or may evoke the number of gifts Indra and Varuṇa should bestow in response.

The omphalos verse is left incomplete: the poet urges the two gods to "establish . . . " (*dhattam* [if this is the correct reading, as we think]) but does not specify the object desired. This truncated wish returns at the end of the hymn, however. The final verse contains two occurrences of this same verb, with a plethora of objects. This completion of the unfinished expression of verse 4 may be seen as another example of "poetic repair" (Jamison 2006).

Indra and Varuṇa do not form a natural pair, and it is not surprising that very few hymns are dedicated to the two alone (I.17, IV.41–42, VI.68, VII.82–85, and a tṛca in III.62 [1–3]). In the more prominent hymns to both divinities, especially the justly celebrated IV.42, their contrastive qualities, especially their different types of kingship, are highlighted. Here by contrast the two gods are essentially featureless (the possible exception is 2cd), their only activities being to accept the soma offering and give prosperity to the sacrificers in return. In fact, vocabulary appropriate to a more standard pair of gods, the Aśvins, is adapted here, especially the vocative "you two lords of beauty" (*śubhas patī*), a common epithet otherwise confined to the Aśvins.

1. These portions here run to you two, Indra and Varuṇa; run forth to you when the (soma-drinks) are pressed, for your great (generosity?).
   At every sacrifice you bustle toward the pressings, when you do your best for the sacrificer who presses (soma).
2. The plants and waters, offering tribute to these two, have reached greatness, o Indra and Varuṇa—
   the two who run on the far side of dusky space, at the far limit of their road, the two of whom no non-god vaunts himself as their rival.
3. This is really true, Indra and Varuṇa: the seven "voices" of Kṛśa milk out a wave of honey for you two.
   With these, you lords of beauty, help the pious man who, undeceivable, keeps watch over you with his thoughts.
4. The ghee-sprinkling companions of soma, possessing lively drops, the seven sisters in the seat of truth,
   who are ghee-dripping for you two, Indra and Varuṇa—with these establish . . . . Do your best for the sacrificer.
5. We have proclaimed a true thing for great good fortune, have proclaimed greatness and Indrian strength for the two vibrant ones.
   Help us who drip ghee, o Indra and Varuṇa, with three groups of seven, you lords of beauty.

6. O Indra and Varuṇa, in that you in the beginning gave to the seers inspired thought, the thinking of speech, what is heard—
   the insightful (seers) launched these as poems as they stretched out the sacrifice. I looked upon them with fervor.
7. Indra and Varuṇa, establish undistracted benevolence and thriving of wealth among the sacrificers.
   Establish offspring, prosperity, and development among us. Lengthen our lifetime for long life.

The grouping of the VIIIth Maṇḍala hymns that follow the Vālakhilya hymns (60–103) is not as clear as in the earlier section of the maṇḍala, in great part because the poets are far less likely to identify themselves. Nonetheless, the order of deities and the number of verses per hymn provide good evidence. We follow Oldenberg's (1888: 216–18) proposed structure.

The next collection of hymns (VIII.60–66) is ascribed to Pragātha and several of his sons. All but the first are dedicated to Indra.

VIII.60 (669) Agni

Bharga Pragātha
20 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

The focus throughout most of this hymn is Agni in his sacrificial role, a theme strongly established in the first five verses, and in his close relationship to the household and clan. As a consequence of this latter relationship he also appears as the protector of those entities against external threats: see verses 6–10, 12–14, and especially the two final verses 19–20. The usual prayers for wealth and aid are not absent, however.

1. Agni, drive here with your fires: we would choose you as our Hotar.
   Let the oblation-bearing (ladle), held forth, anoint you, the best sacrificer, for you to sit upon the ritual grass,
2. For the ladles are moving toward you at the ceremony, o son of strength, o Aṅgiras.
   We supplicate the child of nourishment, ghee-haired Agni, foremost at the sacrifices.

3. O Agni, pure one, you are the sage poet and ritual expert, the Hotar who receives (the command) "sacrifice!"—
   delightful, the best sacrificer, to be invoked at the ceremonies by our inspired poets with their thoughts, o blazing one.
4. Without deception, convey the eager gods here for them to pursue (the offerings), o youngest one, untiring.

Come here to the well-placed pleasing offerings, o good one. Take delight as you are spurred on [/set in place] by our insights.

5. Just you, of great extent, are the entruthed sage poet, o guardian Agni.
Just you do the inspired poets and the ritual experts seek to attract here, o you who shine while being kindled.
6. Blaze bright, brightest blazing one; shine joy for the clan. Give to the praiser. You are great!
Let my patrons, overpowering their rivals and endowed with good fires, be under the shelter of the gods.

7. Just as you incinerate the brushwood grown thick on the ground, o Agni,
in the same way burn whoever stalks (us), lying to us and ill-intentioned, o you who deploy the might of alliance.
8. Do not make us subject to a mortal who is a cheat possessed of demonic power, nor to one who utters evil.
O youngest one, protect us with your protectors that are unfailing, overwhelming, but kindly.

9. Protect us with one, Agni, and protect us with a second.
Protect us with three hymns, o lord of nourishments; protect us with four, o good one.
10. Protect us from every hostile demon. Ever further us when prizes (are at stake),
for we approach just you, the one nearest to the divine assemblage and our friend, for strengthening.

11. (Bring) here to us praiseworthy wealth that strengthens vital force, o pure Agni,
and give it to us, o apportioner—(wealth) much craved and very glorious—with your good guidance—
12. (Wealth) with which we will vanquish in battles those who vaunt themselves, as we overcome the aims of the stranger.
Strengthen us because of our pleasing offering, o you who have the goods of skill. Quicken our insights so they find goods.

13. Like a bull sharpening his horns, shaking them again and again, is Agni.
His sharp jaws are not to be withstood: well fanged is the young (son) of strength.
14. For your fangs are not to be withstood when you spread yourself out, o bullish Agni.
Make our oblation well poured, o Hotar. Win for us many things worth choosing.

15. You lie in the pieces of wood and in your two mothers [=kindling sticks]; the mortals kindle you.
Tireless, you convey the oblations of him who makes oblation. Right after that you shine [/rule] among the gods.
16. The seven Hotars reverently invoke just you, o Agni, the unabashed one displaying great abandon.
You split apart the rock with your heat and your flame. Agni, stand out beyond the peoples.

17. Agni after Agni, not one poor, would we invoke for you [=the assembled clans]—we with our ritual grass twisted,
with our pleasing offerings set in place—Agni here in each and every (clan), the Hotar of the settled domains.
18. He [=singer?] keeps company with your intention in the shelter made of good melody. O perceptive Agni, the *pieces of wood are for you.
By impulsion bring here to us the prize of many forms to be nearest to us, for our aid.

19. O Agni, o singer and god, you are the clanlord who burns the demons, the houselord who doesn't go abroad; you are great—the protector from heaven, but devoted to the house.
20. Let demonic power not enter into us, nor the sorcery of those who deploy sorcery, o you who have the goods of the glowing one [=Pūṣan].
Keep thirst and hunger away, far beyond the pasture-lands; o Agni, keep away those who deploy demonic power.

VIII.61 (670) Indra

Bharga Pragātha
18 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn begins with the invitation to soma (vss. 1–3), but the poet soon turns his attention to the gifts Indra will bestow, a theme that dominates the rest of the first half of the hymn (through vs. 8). The sacrificial context returns at this point, and in verses 11–12 the sacrificers seek to harness Indra as their comrade, whose powers they wish to marshal for their protection against hostile forces (see esp. vss. 13, 15–18).

The syntax is fairly straightforward, but there are a number of rare words and hapaxes (e.g., the last two words of vs. 9) and pleasing verbal plays. The poet especially likes variable repetition (of the type "unassailable assailant" vs. 3).

1. If Indra nearby will hear this twofold speech of ours,
the most powerful benefactor will come here to the soma-drinking by reason of our fully focused insight.

2. For the two Holy Places [=Heaven and Earth] fashioned the bull as sovereign king, for strength.
   And as the first among the highest you take your seat, for your mind has desire for soma.

3. Drench yourself in the pressed stalk, o Indra who bring many goods,
   for we know you, o master of the fallow bays, as victorious in battles, as the unassailable assailant.
4. You whose reality cannot be confounded, o bounteous Indra, it will be just as you wish according to your intention.
   Might we win the prize with your help, o you of fair lips, as we go quickly, o master of the stones.

5. Exert your ability, o master of ability, o Indra, through all your help,
   for we follow after you who are like Bhaga, glorious and finding goods, o champion.
6. As multiplicity yourself, you are a multiplier of horseflesh, of cattle; you are a golden wellspring, o god,
   for no one will shun a gift in your (control). Whatever I beg for, bring that here.

7. Come on and find fortune, to give goods to the attentive man.
   Boil up and over, generous one, for the seeking of cattle, up and over for the seeking of horseflesh, Indra.
8. You are ready to give many thousands and hundreds of herds.
   We of inspired speech have brought the stronghold-splitter here, singing Indra for his help.

9. If without inspiration or if inspired, someone has dedicated his speech to you, Indra,
   he will reach elation in devotion to you—o you of a hundred resolves, whose battle-fury is upfront, whose (motto is) "I shall win!"
10. The strong-armed stronghold-splitter who causes destruction—if he will hear my call,
    we, seeking goods, will call upon the goods-lord of a hundred resolves, upon Indra, with songs of praise.

11. Let us not be regarded as evil, or stingy, or greedy,
    if just now we will make Indra, the bull, into our companion at the pressing.
12. We have yoked the strong one, victorious in battles, the undeceivable one who wants what he's owed.
    The winner, the best charioteer recognizes a prizewinning (racehorse), even when it's a blur—which is just the one he will attain.

13. Whatever we are afraid of, Indra, make us unafraid of that.
    Bounteous one, exert your ability then through your help for us. Smash away hatreds, away slights.
14. For you, lord of largesse, are (lord) of great largesse and of the dwelling place of him who does honor.
    We, who have pressed (the soma), invoke you, bounteous Indra, who long for songs.

15. Indra, spy and Vṛtra-smasher, protector from afar, is worth our choosing.
    He will guard the last one of us and the midmost. Let him protect us from behind and from in front.
16. Protect us from behind, from beneath, from above, from in front, from everywhere, Indra.
    Put far away from us fear of the gods, far away the ungodly missiles.

17. Today after today, tomorrow after tomorrow, rescue us, o Indra—and in the future.
    Through all the days, by day and by night, you will guard our singers, o lord of settlements.
18. Shattering champion, bounteous patron of powerful bounty, equipped for heroic action—
    o you of a hundred resolves, both your arms are bulls, which hold fast to the mace.

VIII.62 (671) Indra

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: paṅkti, except bṛhatī 7–9, arranged in tṛcas

A pleasantly limpid praise of Indra, which emphasizes Indra's pleasure in praise and sacrifice (e.g., vss. 1, 4, 6) and the usual reciprocal benefits exchanged between the god and his worshipers. The relationship between Indra and the sacrificers seems to become stronger as the hymn progresses, its growth tracked through the word "yoke." In the early verses of the hymn Indra is isolated in his accomplishments: in verse 2 he is said to be "without yokemate" and to accomplish his deeds alone; in verse 3 he is about to win even with an unsatisfactory horse. But after he comes to the sacrifice, the exchange relationship between worshiper and god comes to the fore (vs. 5) and already in verse 6 the poet announces that Indra makes the soma-offerer his partner and "yokemate." By the penultimate verse (11) the poet himself, in the first person, proposes that the god and the mortal "yoke ourselves together," to achieve the winnings Indra was on the point of winning alone in verse 3. The poet somewhat hubristically claims that any enemy will yield to "us two," implicitly claiming a kind of equality between the man and the most powerful of gods.

The final verse, as often, is a summary, and it seems to establish the truth value of the whole preceding hymn, as well as the précis given in the last half-verse. The refrain found in every verse establishes the cheerful tone from the start.

1. Present a praise invocation to him so that he will find pleasure.
   By solemn recitations the providers of soma increase the great vitality of Indra.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
2. Without yokemate, without equal among superior men, irrepressible—he alone
   has grown strong over the many peoples, over all created things, with his might.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
3. He of lively gifts is on the point of winning, even with a steed that's not spurred on.
   That of yours should be proclaimed, Indra, when you are going to perform heroic deeds.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
4. Drive here! We shall make strengthening sacred formulations for you, Indra,
   in which you will delight, you strongest one. There is something auspicious here for one who seeks fame.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
5. Bold also is the mind of (you,) the bold, o Indra, when you act
   for the man who renders service with sharp soma drops, who attends with homages.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
6. He who is equal to song gazes down on the (soma-)springs like a man into wells.
   Finding pleasure, he makes a partner and yokemate of the skillful soma-bearer.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
7. All the gods conceded heroism and resolve to you.
   You became the herdsman of all, o you praised by many.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
8. I sing that utmost strength of yours, Indra, for the divine assembly,
   that you smash Vṛtra with your might, o lord of ability.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
9. He will make those who marvel at him into festive assemblies, as it were, throughout the generations of men.
   Indra knows his own distinctive sign: he is famed (for it).
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.

10. They have increased your new-born strength, Indra, increased you and your resolve
    many times, o you of many cows, under your shelter, bounteous one.
    – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
11. I and you, o Vṛtra-smasher—let us two yoke ourselves together for winnings.
    Even a hostile man, o master of the stones, will yield to the two of us, o champion.
    – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
12. This is really true—and thus we shall praise this Indra—not false:
    he is the great weapon of death for the man who does not press soma, but many are his lights for the man who does press.
    – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.

VIII.63 (672) Indra (except the Gods 12)

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, 4, 5, 7 and triṣṭubh 12, arranged in tṛcas.

Compared to the simple diction of the last hymn, this one seems deliberately stiff and full of labored expressions whose decoding slows the pace of the hymn, perhaps on purpose. The hymn's structure, by contrast, is rather simple and follows a straightforward trajectory, with each of the four tṛcas expressing a different theme.

The hymn opens with a mysterious figure, the "tracker," who is smeared or anointed with mental constructs—intentions and insights—by two different agents, who can be plausibly identified as the gods and Manu in his role as father of mankind and the first sacrificer. This liminal figure, the tracker, is most likely a ritual mediator between the divine and the human, and Agni makes the most sense as the referent. The second verse confirms the ritual setting, and in the third verse Indra makes his first appearance, in his role as opener of the Vala cave. This mythological reference calls dawn to mind, and suggests the time of the current sacrifice. Thus, the first tṛca establishes the scene as the Morning Pressing.

The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) then calls Indra to that sacrifice; each verse contains the word *arká* "chant." In the third tṛca (vss. 7–10) various deeds of Indra are celebrated, especially his defeat of enemies for the Five Peoples (vs. 7) and his involvement, with Viṣṇu, in the killing of the Emuṣa boar (vs. 9), a myth which is a specialty of this part of Maṇḍala VIII (VIII.69.14–15; 77.1–2, 6–8, 10–11; 96.2). Here only the preliminaries, in which a rice porridge is fetched by Viṣṇu to nourish Indra, are treated. The middle verse 8 mentions Indra's manly deeds in general, but also contains the phrase "you furthered the turning of the wheel" (*cakrásya*

vartanim), which reminds us of the later designation *cakra-vartin* "turner of the wheel" for a universal monarch. The last tṛca (vss. 10–12) introduces the Maruts and finally the gods in general as associates of Indra and calls on all of them for help.

1. The tracker [=Agni?], stationed in front, has been smeared with the intentions of the great ones [=gods],
   he on whose doors father Manu smeared insightful thoughts to the gods.
2. The stones with soma on their backs have sat up, as if to the measure of heaven.
   The solemn words and sacred formulations are now to be recited.
3. Indra, knowing how, uncovered the cows for the Aṅgirases.
   That manly act of his is to be praised.

4. As of old, let Indra, strengthener of poets, fortifier of speech,
   the kindly one, come among us for help at the pouring of our chant.
5. And therefore, following the intention of your will, those eager to sacrifice (have cried out) "hail!";
   their chants have cried out to (you), who are swollen with strength, Indra, to give of the cowpen.
6. All heroic deeds, both done and to be done, are in Indra,
   whom the chants know as the very ceremony itself.

7. When cries were sent surging to Indra by the clan belonging to the Five Peoples,
   through the power of their inspiration, through the power of his measure he laid the strangers low. He is peaceful dwelling.
8. Here is the praise that follows you: you did these manly deeds;
   you furthered the turning of the wheel.
9. (Viṣṇu) strode widely to the rice porridge for this bull to live on.
   (Indra) took it, as cattle do barley.

10. Seeking help as we present this (praise hymn), through you (all) might we have skill as our father
    for the strengthening of the one accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra].
11. Yes indeed! through our chanters we cry out again and again for your establishment according to the ritual sequence, o champion.
    Let us conquer with you as our yokemate, Indra.
12. For us are the Rudras [=Maruts] in their profusion and the mountains of one accord at the Vṛtra-smashing, where the call is "Carry (the day)!"
    The steadfast one who has been established for the praiser and presser—with him, Indra, as their chief let the gods help us.

VIII.64 (673) Indra

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

A hymn artful in its extreme simplicity. Its diction, its syntax, and its structure are all straightforward. It consists of four tṛcas. The first (vss. 1–3) begs Indra for gifts and aid against enemies and celebrates his preeminence. The second (vss. 4–6) calls him to the sacrifice. The third (vss. 7–9) consists of rhetorical questions about Indra's whereabouts and the possibility of his consorting with other sacrificers. The final one (vss. 10–12) presents him with the just-pressed soma.

The transparency of the hymn is produced in great part by its syntax: many of the verses contain several short, generally pāda-length sentences (vs. 1 is a typical example), and more extreme concision is encountered in the abrupt series of imperatives "come! run! drink!" in the last tṛca (vss. 10c and 12c; cf. also 4a). Even when the sentence extends beyond the pāda, it often deploys simple parallel constituents across two pādas (e.g., vss. 3ab, 6ab). There is also no overt subordination in the hymn (unless we count the *nahí* ["for not"] clause of 2c). There are almost no past tenses (only in 5c [perfect] and 9a [aorist]); the finite verb forms are otherwise limited to imperatives, indicative presents, and one presential perfect (8c).

The sentiments expressed and the vocabulary are likewise uncomplex and standard. Only the penultimate verse (11), with its apparent references to locales for finding soma, causes any interpretive problems.

1. Let the praises whip you up. Show your generosity, o master of the stones.
   Strike down the haters of sacred formulations.
2. With your foot stamp down the ungenerous niggards. You are great,
   for no one is equal to you.
3. You are master of the pressed soma-drops, and you, Indra, of the unpressed ones.
   You are the king of the peoples.

4. Come here! Go forth—your dwelling is in heaven—as you take heed of the separate communities.
   You fill both worlds.
5. This very mountain, this peak, which holds a hundred, a thousand (cows),
   did you shatter apart for your praisers.
6. We by day at the pressing and we by night call upon you:
   fulfill our desire!

7. Where is this young, strong-necked bull who cannot be bowed?
   Who is the formulator who serves him?
8. To whose pressing does the bull, relishing it, descend?
   Who finds their pleasure in Indra?

9. Whom have your gifts accompanied, whom have masses of brave men, o Vṛtra-smasher.
   Who at the recitation is closest (to you)?

10. This soma here is being pressed for you amid the people of Manu, among the Pūrus.
    Of that—come! run!—drink!
11. Here is your dear (soma) in the reed-filled (pond?), here in the Suṣomā (River?)
    the most invigorating in the foamy (lake?).
12. (Drink) this delightful one today for (you to show) great generosity, for thrilling invigoration—
    come to it, Indra! run! drink!

VIII.65 (674) Indra

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn is at least superficially a twin to the last one: it is attributed to the same poet, consists of the same number of verses, and is in the same meter. And indeed it shows important similarities to VIII.64. It, too, tends to short, often pāda-length, syntactic units and to balanced parallel constituents (e.g., 2a, c, 6ab), and there are even agreements in wording: the abrupt verse-final imperative "drink!" of VIII.64.10 and 12 is repeated in 65.5 and 8 (with the former also containing *éhi* "come!" like the examples in VIII.64), and "we call upon" appears in the same verse (6) in the same position in both hymns.

However, VIII.65 introduces some complications absent from VIII.64. Unlike 64, which had no subordination at all, 65 begins with a subordinating conjunction (*yád*), which occurs three times in the first two verses, and verse 2 finds its main clause only in verse 3. (See also vs. 7.) Though present indicatives and imperatives predominate, the range of verbal forms is somewhat widened as well, with injunctives (9b, 10c), aorists (8b, 12c), a subjunctive (2b), a preterital perfect (probably, 11c), and a number of dative infinitives, as well as two of the much discussed *-ṣé* forms (5a).

The diction can be more resistant than that of VIII.64, as in verse 2 where the choices given to Indra are puzzling. Are these places (as in the also puzzling 64.11) or sources of exhilaration, and are there two choices or three? What do the opaque phrases, especially "the sea of the stalk," refer to?

Like VIII.64 this hymn consists of four tṛcas. The last (vss. 10–12) is clearly defined as a dānastuti. The other three are not thematically differentiated. They all call on Indra to attend our sacrifice, and the major concern running throughout is that rival sacrificers are competing with us for his presence (e.g., vss. 1, 2, 7, 9). These first three tṛcas, before the dānastuti, display ring composition: the command "drive here straightaway" (*á yāhi tűyam*) in 1c is echoed in 9b "come here straightaway" (*tűyam á gahi*).

1. When, Indra, you are being called forward or back, upward or down by men,
   drive here straightaway with your swift (horses).
2. Whether you will bring yourself to exhilaration on the outpouring of heaven in the presence of Svarṇara,
   or on the sea of the stalk,
3. I call you here with songs, you great and broad, like a cow to give sustenance,
   and to drink of the soma, Indra.

4. Your greatness, Indra, your grandeur, god—let your fallow bays, bearing it, carry it here on your chariot.
5. Indra, you are to be hymned and praised: great, powerful, performing the master's part.
   Come to our pressed soma! Drink!
6. We, who have pressed soma and have a pleasing offering, call you to take your seat here upon this our ritual grass.

7. Even though you are the support common to each and every one, Indra, we summon you to us.
8. Here is the somian honey for you—the men have milked it out with stones.
   Finding enjoyment, Indra, drink it!
9. Look beyond all the strangers who are also attentive to poetic inspiration. Come here straightaway.
   Place lofty fame in us.

10. The king is a giver to me—of dappled cows (with horns) wrapped in gold.
    Let the bounteous patron not suffer harm, o gods.
11. On top of the thousand dappled cows, I took glistening, lofty, wide, gleaming gold.
12. The descendants of Durgaha, very generous with a thousand for me, have made fame for themselves among the gods.

VIII.66 (675) Indra

Kali Prāgātha
15 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas, except anuṣṭubh 15

This hymn of fifteen verses is longer than the Indra hymns that precede it (VIII.62–65, all twelve verses long), and is therefore out of place in the collection. Oldenberg suggests (*Noten* ad loc.) that it may consist of two hymns (or even three): verses 1–8

and 9–14, with verse 15 appended in a different meter. However, as he also notes (1888: 217), there is no strong internal support for this division, and it may very well be a single hymn.

The invitation to Indra to the soma sacrifice is the primary theme of the hymn. It begins with a call for Indra's help (vs. 1) and continues with descriptions of the sacrificial offerings (vss. 5–8, 11–12), along with the usual hope that Indra will choose our sacrifice over those of others (see esp. vs. 12). The poet remarks particularly on the regular and predictable nature of the sacrifice (vs. 7), and in a striking image in verse 8 suggests to Indra that, since even the apparently uncontrollable wolf follows its own routine, Indra should make it a habit to attend our sacrifice as he has before. The regular nature of the sacrifice has its drawbacks, of course: many others before us and many others around us have performed and continue to perform it, but the poet assures Indra in verse 11 that although he and his comrades are only the most recent among the sacrificers, their formulations are novel and unprecedented (see also vs. 5). The competition between us and the others is emphasized by the numerous occurrences of "many" in this hymn.

Interspersed are verses celebrating Indra's power and his aid to his worshipers (vss. 2–4, 9–10). Not all of this praise is entirely clear, especially that in 3ab, where Indra is identified with two hapaxes, our translations of which are quite provisional. In the final pragātha (vss. 13–14) the poet makes his strongest plea for Indra's help. The final verse (15), in a different meter as noted, is puzzling. It reassures an otherwise unknown group of people, the Kalis, that if they press soma, whatever is threatening them will disappear.

1. With staying power and force (I call for) Indra, finder of goods, for help;
   as (we) sing loftily at the rite with its pressed soma, I call (for him) as if for the takings of a decisive victor,
2. Whom neither obdurate nor substantial hindrances will obstruct when the fair-lipped one is in the exhilaration of the stalk,
   who, tearing them out for the laboring presser, is the giver of praiseworthy (goods) to the singer.

3. The able one, who is a horse's curry comb [?] or who is a golden stake [?],
   he sets the opening of the cattle-pen to shaking—Indra the Vṛtra-smasher.
4. He who casts upward for the pious man the goods assembled by many, even when they are buried deep,
   Indra, with mace, fair lips, and fallow bays, will act as he wishes according to his will.

5. O champion praised by many, whatever belonging to men you held dear even before,
   we assemble that for you, Indra: the sacrifice, the solemn word, and the surpassing speech,

6. As well as the soma drinks for your exhilaration, o mace-wielder invoked by many, heaven-ruling soma-drinker.
   For you become the best giver of desirable goods to the creator of sacred formulations, to the presser.

7. At this time yesterday we made the mace-bearer drink here;
   today, in the same way, bring the pressed soma to him. Now attend upon the renowned one.
8. Even a wolf—wild and sheep-stealing—attends to its own patterns.
   Come here, having found pleasure in this praise song of ours with its shimmering insight, Indra.

9. What manly deed of his now remains undone by Indra?
   Indeed, by what fame has the Vṛtra-smasher not been famed from his birth?
10. Are there great powers that are unassailable by him? What has not been laid low by the Vṛtra-smasher?
    Indra dominates all the Bekanāṭas who see the day and the Paṇis through his will.

11. (Although we are) the latest of many, we present to you sacred formulations without precedent, o Indra, Vṛtra-smasher,
    like a present, o mace-bearer invoked by many.
12. For although many are the hopes that call to you, powerfully ranging Indra, and many are your forms of help,
    pass over the pressings of the stranger, good one. Most mighty one, heed my call.

13. We are yours; we inspired poets abide just in you, o Indra,
    for there exists no other dispenser of mercy than you, o bounteous one invoked by many.
14. You—rescue us from this neglect and hunger, from their curse.
    You—because of our brilliant insight, do your best for us with your help, most able one, as the way-finder.

15. Let just your soma be pressed. Kalis, stop fearing:
    this miasma will go away; by itself it will go away.

The next group likely consists of 67–71, though Oldenberg (1888: 217) considers the possibility that VIII.72 belongs here as well. Save for VIII.67 with its fanciful authorial ascription, the rest (68–71) are attributed to Āṅgirasa poets.

VIII.67 (676) Ādityas

Matsya Sāmmada or Mānya Maitrāvaruṇi or many fish caught in a net [*bahavo matsyā jālanaddhāḥ*]
21 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

According to the Anukramaṇī, a fish (Matsya) or "many fish caught in a net" are two of the three possible composers of this hymn. Unfortunately, there is not a scrap of evidence in the hymn itself for these intriguing ascriptions. The poet begs the Ādityas and their mother Aditi, who is more prominent in the hymn than in most Āditya hymns (vss. 10–12, 14, 18), for shelter and protection from a range of dangers and enemies and for continued life for ourselves and our progeny.

1. Now we shall beg these rulers, the Ādityas, for help—
   the very merciful ones, (for us) to prevail.
2. Mitra will carry us beyond constraint, and Varuṇa and Aryaman,
   just as the Ādityas know how.
3. For their bright, praiseworthy shield exists for the pious man—
   (the shield) of the Ādityas for the man who does it right.

4. Great is the help of you who are great, o Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.
   We choose your help.
5. Gird us, alive, against the deadly blow, o Ādityas.
   Are you ones who heed the call?
6. Your shield, your shelter that exists for the man who has ritually
   labored and who presses soma—
   with that intercede for us.

7. O gods, does there exist wide (space emerging) from out of constraint?
   Does there exist a treasure for the blameless man,
   o Ādityas, you (whom others') offenses cannot mislead?
8. Let this fetter here not bind us; let it avoid us for our great (good
   fortune?),
   for only Indra is famous for imposing his will.
9. Don't (harm) us with the harm of crooked cheats.
   O gods greedy to help, seize them!

10. And, great goddess Aditi, I entreat you,
    the very merciful, (for us) to prevail.
11. Deliver us, whether we're in the shallows or the deep, from someone
    who wishes to smite us, o you who have powerful sons.
    Let none of our offspring be injured.
12. Make faultless (shelter) for us, o widely spreading (goddess) possessing
    a wide enclosure, (for us) to extend afar
    and for our offspring to live.

13. They who, as heads of the settled peoples, untrickable, self-glorious,
    without deceit, guard their commandments—
14. Being such, free us from the mouth of wolves, o Ādityas,
    like a thief who's been bound, o Aditi.
15. Let this arrow go away from us, o Ādityas,
    away malevolence, without striking us.

16. Because, o Ādityas of good gifts, over and over,
    previously and now, we have benefited by your help—
17. Because, o attentive gods, each and every man, even one coming back
    from an offense,
    do you make to live—
18. *This* is the new (life) for an older (man) that will free us, o Ādityas,
    like a bound man from his bondage, o Aditi.

19. We do not have the driving force to leap beyond, Ādityas.
    You—have mercy upon us!
20. O Ādityas, let the missile of Vivasvant, the finely made arrow,
    not strike us now before old age.
21. O Ādityas, rip apart hostility, apart constraint, apart what is packed
    together;
    rip malady apart and asunder.

VIII.68 (677) Indra (1–13), Dānastuti of Ṛkṣa and Āśvamedha (14–19)

Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
19 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, 4, 7, 10. Verses 1–12 arranged in tṛcas

This hymn falls into two parts. It begins with four tṛcas (vss. 1–12) dedicated to Indra, each beginning with an anuṣṭubh verse and continuing in gāyatrī; there follows a single appended verse (13) continuing the thought of the previous verse. The final six verses are a dānastuti to a set of patrons whose names and identities are not entirely easy to sort out.

The Indra portion is conventional, with an emphasis on his extreme power and might. The dānastuti is likewise comparatively straightforward compared to others of this genre, with a catalogue of the gifts received and a promise to the patrons, expressed in surprisingly negative terms, that even a man who wishes to insult them will not be able to do so (vs. 19).

1. We will turn you here, like a chariot, for help and favor,
   you powerfully ranging one who vanquish through your attack, o Indra,
   strongest lord of the settlements.

2. O you of powerful outbursts, of powerful will, you able one whose thought is everywhere,
you have filled (everywhere) with your greatness,
3. You the great, whose hands with their greatness have encompassed the earth-encircling mace of gold.

4. The lord of the unbowable strengths who has domain over all men
do I call for you, together with his means and help for the separate peoples and their chariots—
5. Him, ever-strengthening, whom men, every man for himself, call on in (contests) whose prize is the sun,
for dominance and for help,
6. Indra, beyond measure and equal to song, strong, of good generosity,
holding sway also over goods.

7. Him and him alone, Indra, do I impel to drink, for the sake of his great generosity—
the dancer who holds sway over the communities, according to the ancient praise that follows him.
8. You whose fellowship no (other) mortal has attained,
he will not attain your strengths, o you who swell with strength.
9. Aided by you, with you as our yokemate, might we win in our battles
a great stake in the waters and the sun, o mace-bearer.

10. We implore you with our sacrifices, with our songs, o Indra most longing for songs,
just as you helped Purumāyya in the prize-contests.
11. You whose fellowship is sweet, whose leadership is sweet, o master of the stones—
yours is the sacrifice worth tussling over.
12. Make it wide for our own body and our lineage, wide for our dwelling.
Extend it wide for us to live.

13. As a path wide for our men, wide for our cow, wide for our chariot—
thus do we consider our pursuit of the gods.

14. Six men having sweet gifts approach me
two by two, in the excitement of soma.
15. From Indrota I received two silvery ones, from the son of Ṛkṣa two fallow bays,
and the two chestnuts of the son of Aśvamedha;
16. (Horses) having good chariots from the son of Atithigva, those having good reins from the son of Ṛkṣa,
and those having good ornaments from the son of Aśvamedha.

17. I gained six (horses), along with brides [?], from the son of Atithigva, from Indrota,
along with Pūtakratu.
18. In the midst of these silvery ones there appeared a ruddy female [=Dawn?] along with a bull,
having good reins and a whip.
19. Never will a mortal seeking to scorn you [=patrons], o you who are kin to prizes,
hold disrepute over you.

VIII.69 (678) Indra (1–10, 13–18), All Gods (11ab), Varuṇa (11cd–12)

Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
18 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 4–6, paṅkti 11, 16, bṛhatī 17–18 [2 wrongly identified as uṣṇih by Anukramaṇī]

This often baffling hymn is metrically complex, as the above summary shows, and its metrical patterns do not always coincide with its intricate structure. Although many details remains obscure, the thematic outline of the hymn becomes clearer when that structure has been discerned. In our view, the hymn falls into two halves (vss. 1–9, 10–18), which are exactly parallel. Each consists of two tṛcas (1–6, 10–15), followed by a single verse celebrating the partnership between Indra and the poet (7, 16), and ending with two verses concerning the Priyamedhas' ritual offering to Indra (8–9, 17–18). The parallelism is especially clear in the final three verses of each half: both 7 and 16 contain the dual optative *sacevahi* "might we two become comrades" and concern a journey of a certain number of steps. In both 8–9 and 17–18 the Priyamedhas are explicitly mentioned. They are exhorted to ritual performance in verses 8–9, while in 17–18, as is suitable in hymn-final verses, their performance is summarized. The parallelism between the opening tṛcas of both halves is much freer, though there are rough correspondences.

The relationship between the two tṛcas of the first half is noteworthy. The first tṛca (vss. 1–3) is quite puzzling, with opaque phraseology and uncertain references; the second tṛca (vss. 4–6) seems a double of the first, paraphrasing and explaining it, in a sort of global example of "poetic repair" (Jamison 2006). The second tṛca exhorts the poet to "chant forth" to Indra (vs. 4), and the next two verses describe the preparation of soma for Indra, with the soma drops racing to the milk (conceptualized, as so often, as cows). With this in mind we can approach the first tṛca. In verse 1 the opening phrase "forth, forth" recalls the similar phrase in verse 4 and allows the verb "chant" to be supplied (see also vs. 8). In verse 1 the recipient of what is chanted, the poem, identified as "triṣṭubh refreshment," is clearly Soma ("the drop"), not Indra as in verse 4, but the constructions are parallel. The poem is

then the subject of the second half of the verse, as it seeks to win something unspecified. In our opinion the subject of verse 2 is this same poem, taking aim at Soma (the "roaring bull") among the cows, who represent the milk-mixture. In verse 3 the soma mixture is prepared for Indra, and, it seems, for the rest of the gods.

This matched pair of triplets is followed by the remarkable verse 7, in which the poet proposes a partnership between himself and Indra, a partnership to be sealed by the symbolic seven steps that in the later marriage ceremony make a marriage legal after the bride and groom have taken them, and that already in the Ṛgveda (X.8.4) are the symbolic act creating a contract or alliance. The phrase "the seven(th) step of the comrade" seems to refer to this ceremonial institution. In order to make this alliance the poet and Indra go to Indra's own home and drink the soma together, having made the journey over the surface of the sea of soma (in our view, though others consider this to be a reference to the sun). The relationship between poet and god is thus a surprisingly intimate one, reminiscent of that between the poet Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa in VII.86–89, especially the verses describing their former comradeship with grammatical constructions and lexicon very similar to those here (VII.88.3–5). It is also similar to nearby VIII.62.11, where the poet again proposes that he and Indra yoke themselves together. The first half of the hymn is then brought to a close by the aforementioned exhortation to the Priyamedhas to chant to Indra (vs. 8), with a tantalizing glimpse of what appear to be three musical instruments accompanying them (vs. 9).

The two ṭṛcas opening the second half of the hymn (vss. 10–15) reverse the order of obscurity. The first (vss. 10–12) is relatively straightforward and, at least to begin with, matches material in the first half: the speckled cows giving milk for the soma mixture in verse 10 remind us of the dappled cows and their milk in verse 3 (also 5–6), and Indra and other gods partake of the soma in verse 11, though the presence and role of Varuṇa in verses 11–12 are somewhat puzzling. However, it is the next ṭṛca (vss. 13–15) that almost defeats the interpreter, especially verse 13. There is no agreement even on what god (or gods) the verse concerns, much less on what the actions in question are and whether the verse is a self-contained syntactic unit. We are inclined to take the verse as a suite of relative clauses referring to Indra, who is triumphantly proclaimed in verse 14. The second half of verse 14 alludes to the Emuṣa myth (also treated in VIII.77, etc.), in which, it seems, Indra as a boy slew a boar named Emuṣa by shooting through a mountain, and brought (or Viṣṇu brought him) a rice porridge and some buffalo (which had been protected by the boar?) from the mountain. The next verse (15) most likely also concerns this myth, or it may refer to another of Indra's boyhood deeds. There are numerous difficulties in these three verses, and our translation is only provisional.

The following verse (16) brings us back to the present, with the poet's second proposition of fellowship to Indra, again in the course of a journey. And the final two verses (17–18) summarize the Priyamedhas' ritual efforts and pronounces them even better than before.

We cannot claim to have settled the many issues of this hymn, but the structure outlined above does give a context in which to evaluate the difficulties that remain.

1. Forth, (chant) forth your triṣṭubh refreshment to the drop that invigorates heroes.
   With your visionary thought and with plenitude it is seeking to win, in order to gain wisdom.
2. You take aim at the roaring bull among your moist [=willing] females and at the roaring bull among the females who keep hanging back,
   at the lord of your prized milk-cows.
3. These dappled cows, which give the sweetening milk, prepare the soma for him [=Indra].
   At its birth the clans of the gods are in the three luminous realms of heaven.

4. Chant forth with a song to the lord of cows, to Indra, in the way that is known,
   to the son of the real, the master of settlements.
5. The tawny (soma-drops) have been let loose at the ruddy (cows) upon the ritual grass,
   where we will bellow out together.
6. The cows have milked out the milk-mixture for Indra, the honey for the mace-bearer,
   since he found them in the remote place.

7. As we two, Indra and (I), go up to his home along the surface of the coppery (soma),
   having drunk of the honey three times, might we two become comrades at the seven(th) step of the comrade.

8. Chant! Chant forth! Chant, o Priyamedhas!
   Let your little sons chant, and you—chant boldly as if against a fortress.
9. The Gargara(-instrument) will gurgle downward, the Godhā(-vīṇā) will keep resounding all around,
   and the Piṅgā(-string) will keep quivering all around. The sacred formulation is offered up to Indra.

10. When the speckled (cows), who yield good milk and never kick, fly here, take hold of the kicking soma for Indra to drink.
11. Indra has drunk; Agni has drunk. All the gods have become exhilarated.
    Varuṇa will settle here, too. The waters have bellowed out to him, as (cows) that share their young do to their calf.

12. You are well-provided with gods, Varuṇa—you through whose gullet the seven rivers
stream, as through a tube that provides easy flow.

13. He who made the paired, well-yoked horses leap for the pious man,
(who is) their swooping leader—and just this is the marvel—who was set loose as the very measure (of heaven)—
14. Just he is solemnly proclaimed as the able one, as Indra, beyond all hatreds.
The lad ripped (out) the rice porridge that was cooking far away on the mountain.
15. Like a teeny-tiny wee little boy, he mounted his new chariot.
He cooked the wild buffalo of prodigious will for his father and mother.

16. You fair-lipped houselord, mount your golden chariot.
Then we two might become comrades along the heavenly, ruddy (path) with a thousand steps,
faultless and leading to well-being.

17. Bringing homage, they reverently approach him, their sovereign king, just so.
Just this is his well-set goal when they turn him here to come and to give.
18. Following the (custom) of their ancient house, the Priyamedhas
with twisted ritual grass, with their pleasing offering set in place, have equaled their previous presentation.

VIII.70 (679) Indra

Puruhanman Āṅgirasa
15 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī arranged in pragāthas 1–6; bṛhatī arranged in tṛcas 7–12; uṣṇih 13, anuṣṭubh 14, puraüṣṇih 15

Another metrically complex hymn. The first six verses consist of three pragāthas in bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, the next six (7–12) of two tṛcas in bṛhatī, and the last three (13–15) of verses in three different meters, but all consisting of eight syllable or a mixture of eight and twelve syllable lines, like the bṛhatī/satobṛhatī verses before them.

The thematic divisions correspond well with these metrical divisions. The first six verses are extravagant praise of Indra's unequalled power. Having flattered him with his praise, the poet occupies the tṛca portion with the usual requests for Indra to exercise his generosity and, more strikingly, for him to punish mortals who do not worship him and do not follow the Ārya way, with the

culminating verse 11 listing the numerous ways in which this evil man can deviate from the proper path. One of the stylistic features especially of the tṛca section (but see also vs. 4) is the tendency for the final word or words of the c and d pādas to match (4cd, 7cd, 8cd, 11cd, 12cd; see also 9a+d), and there are other verse-internal echoes.

The final three verses (13–15) are a dānastuti of Śara Śauradevya, or rather what we might term an anti-dānastuti or, technically, a satire. The first of these verses (13) poses a rhetorical question that seems to promise lavish praise to come, but the poet takes this back in verse 14 with another rhetorical question: will you really receive praise for a gift that consists of calves doled out in miserly fashion? The final verse specifies just how miserly: a single calf for three poets. In these verses the standard vocabulary of generosity (benefactor, patron, bounteous one) is deployed sarcastically, and the poet cleverly gives his criticism a gloss of praise.

For an analysis of the phonetic and grammatical features of the entire hymn, see Watkins (1995: 184–87).

1. He who is king of the separate peoples, a driver with chariots, rich,
an overcomer in all battles, who is sung as the preeminent smasher of Vṛtra—
2. Beautify that Indra, o Puruhanman, for his help, him whose (mace) is once again in (the hand of) the apportioner:
the mace, lovely to see, has been put back into his hand, like the great sun into heaven.

3. No one will catch up with him who by his (ritual?) action created an ever strengthening one
like Indra, welcomed with sacrifices by all, ingenious, unassailable but of assailing might,
4. Invincible, mighty, and victorious in battles, in whose (control) are the great, wide-expanding (waters?).
While he was being born, the milk-cows kept bellowing in unison; the heavens and earths kept bellowing.

5. Since a hundred heavens and a hundred earths could be yours, Indra,
a thousand suns were not equal to you when you were just born, o mace-bearer, nor were the two world-halves.
6. You have filled all things with your bullish greatness, bull, and with your strength, strongest one.
Help us to a pen full of cattle with your bright help, bounteous mace-bearer.

7. A godless mortal shall not acquire refreshment, o long-lived one!
Indra, who will yoke his two steeds that win dappled cows, who will yoke his two fallow bays—

8. (Call upon) him to give to you—Indra, the conqueror to be greatly magnified,
who is to be called upon at the fords and in foreign parts, who is to be called upon at the prize-contests.
9. Shape us up for your great generosity, o good one, champion—
(shape us) up for your great giving of bounty, bounteous one; (shape us) up for great fame, Indra.

10. You are the one who seeks the truth for us, Indra. You find no satisfaction in him who reviles you.
Gird yourself in between your thighs, o you of mighty manliness. Jab down the Dāsa with your blows.
11. The man who follows other commandments, who is no son of Manu, no sacrificer, no devotee of the gods—
him should your own comrade, the mountain [=mace?], send tumbling down; the mountain (should send down) the Dasyu for easy smiting.
12. O strongest Indra, grab a handful of these (cows), o most capacious one, to give to us,
like a handful of roasted grains, being disposed toward us. Grab two, being disposed toward us.

13. O comrades, find the resolve: how shall we bring to success our invocatory praise of Śara,
who is a benefactor, a patron without restraint?
14. Will you be praised in any way by many seers provided with ritual grass, Śara, if you will hand over your calves in just this way, one by one?
15. The bounteous son of Śūradeva, having grabbed hold of its ear, led a calf here to us three,
a patron (leading) a nanny-goat to give suck (to three kids).

VIII.71 (680) Agni

Sudīti Āṅgirasa and/or Purumīḷha Āṅgirasa
15 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas 1–9; bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī arranged in pragāthas 10–15

This, the last hymn of the small Āṅgirasa collection VIII.67–71, falls into two parts, defined by meter: verse 1–9 in gāyatrī tṛcas and 10–15 in bṛhatī/satobṛhatī pragāthas. As Oldenberg suggested (1888: 217; *Noten* ad loc.), it could be made up of two separate hymns, and the lack of thematic continuity in fact favors this division, though there is some shared vocabulary. The first names of the two alternative poets suggested by the Anukramaṇī were extracted from verse 14.

The first nine verses beg Agni's protection for the pious worshiper from all manner of malign and threatening forces, particularly those of other humans. It is

Agni's power as a god that is emphasized, with mortals hostile or devout subject to this superior divine power, to be punished or rewarded, as they deserve.

The second part of the hymn (vss. 10–15) is dominated by a stylistic pattern: Agni in the accusative case is the goal of sacrificial actions and words throughout this section. In verse 10 he is not named, but an epithet in the accusative is found in every pāda of the verse. His name (*agnim*) begins the next verse (11a), and in the subsequent verses it is featured again and again. Verse 12 contains five occurrences of *agnim*, one beginning every pāda, plus one in the middle of the third. Verse 13 varies the pattern by beginning with a nominative form of the name, but the second half-verse returns to the initial accusative, which continues through the subsequent verses: three examples of initial *agnim* in verse 14 (pādas a, c, d), two in the final verse (15a, b). The interplay between our ritual devotion and prayers and his gifts and aid is the topic of this section, but the content is far less noticeable than the form.

1. O Agni, protect us by your great powers from all hostility and from mortal hatred.
2. For no human fury is master of you (gods), o (Agni), born dear. Just you are the protector of the earth.
3. O child of nourishment, of fortunate flame, along with all the gods give us wealth consisting of all desirable things.

4. Hostilities do not keep that mortal away from wealth, o Agni, the pious one whom you safeguard.
5. Whom you impel toward the stakes at the winning of the wisdom—o Agni, inspired poet—
he by your help will arrive at cows.
6. (Give) wealth consisting of many heroes to the pious mortal. Lead us forth to a better state.

7. Deliver us: do not hand us over to one who wishes evil, o Jātavedas, to the mortal of evil intent.
8. Agni, let no non-god keep away the gift of you, a god. You are the master of goods.
9. Mete out a measure of your great good, o child of nourishment, to us who are your singers, o comrade, o good one.

10. Let our songs go to him of sharp flame, lovely to see;
(let) our sacrifices (go) with reverence to him of many goods, lauded by many, for his help—
11. To Agni, the son of strength, Jātavedas, for a gift of valuable things,
(Agni,) who once again has come to be the immortal here among mortals, the most delighting Hotar in the clan.

12. Agni (we beseech) on your behalf with sacrifice to the gods, Agni as the ceremony proceeds,
Agni first in insights, Agni when a charger (is at stake), Agni to assure success to the cultivated lands.

13. Let Agni in fellowship give us of his refreshments, he who is master of valuable things.
    Agni we beseech over and over when progeny and posterity (are at stake), since he is the good one, the protector of our bodies.

14. Agni—with songs reverently invoke him of sharp flame for help;
    Agni the famed (do) men (invoke) for wealth, o Purumīḷha; Agni as shelter for Sudīti.
15. Agni we hymn to keep hatred away from us; Agni to give us luck and lifetime.
    In all the clans he will be the one to be invoked like a helper, the lighter of the morning rays.

The next group consists of only three hymns, X.72–74 and has no real signature features.

VIII.72 (681) Agni or Praise of Oblations

Haryata Prāgātha
18 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is so opaque that it is not even clear to whom, or what, it is dedicated. The Anukramaṇī gives two choices: Agni or "praise of oblations" (*haviṣāṃ stutiḥ*). There are several good reasons to prefer the second designation, or at least to reject the first. On the one hand, Agni is named only once, close to the end (vs. 15) and in conjunction with Indra. Though the ritual fire and its divine representative are clearly the referents in a number of verses, a number of different ritual substances and apparatus are also referred to through the hymn; the fire is not significantly more prominent. Moreover, as Oldenberg points out (1888: 217), the third hymn in this little collection is clearly to Agni, so that the first should have a different dedicand.

As a number of scholars have noted, the hymn contains a sequence of ritual moments, sometimes even quoting from mantras found in later ritual, depicted in allusive and indirect fashion. Although some have tried to find a systematic and sequential representation of the, or a, sacrifice, these efforts have not been successful. Rather we seem to have a set of discontinuous sacrificial vignettes, cast as riddles. Though nowhere near as famous as the well-known riddle hymn (I.164), this hymn resembles that one in certain ways, including a fondness for numerology (vss. 7–9) and for unidentified referents (throughout).

We confess to being uncertain about many of the answers to these implicit riddles, and for others the machinery of explanation would overwhelm the poetry. We have therefore for the most part avoided parenthetical identifications and paraphrases. In general the first verses (esp. 2–5) seem to concern Agni and the initiation

of the sacrifice, signaled by the sighting of the horses and chariot (of the sun?) in verse 6. Most of the rest of the hymn, verses 7–17, concerns the preparation of soma. The final verse (18) has much the same structure as verse 6, which closed the first section of the hymn, and has similar annunciatory function.

1. Make oblation! He will come here. The Adhvaryu seeks (him) again, knowing his command.
2. The Hotar sits down beside the sharp soma-plant, in Manu's presence, taking pleasure in its companionship.
3. They seek him within (themselves) and among the people, (seek him) as Rudra beyond inspired thought.
   With his tongue they grasp the grain.
4. I have heated my familial bow. Imparting vital force, he has mounted the wood.
   With his tongue he has struck the millstone.
5. The gleaming calf, roaming here, does not find anyone to bind it.
   It pursues its mama to praise (her).
6. And it's just now that his team of horses, great and lofty,
   the binder of the chariot, has been sighted.
7. The seven (priests) milk the one (cow [=soma plant?]), and the two (=hands?) send the five (fingers?) nearby,
   at the ford of the river, at its sound.
8. With the ten (fingers) of Vivasvant, Indra has agitated the cask of heaven with his triple hammer.
9. A newer firebrand goes around the ceremonial course three times.
   With honey the Hotars perform the anointing.
10. With reverence they dip out the encompassing wellspring with its (water-)wheel above
    and its sides facing downward, the inexhaustible one.
11. The pressing stones are just on their way to it. The honey has been poured down into the lotus
    at the wellspring's surging forth.
12. O cows, approach the wellspring with help. Great is (the vessel?) of the sacrifice, giving teeming abundance;
    its two ears [=handles?] are golden.
13. Into the pressed soma pour glory [=milk], the full glory of the two world-halves.
    The Rasā (River [=water]) should receive the bull.
14. They [=soma juices] recognize their own home. Like calves coming together with their mothers,
    they pair off with their kin [=milk and water].
15. In the jaws of the (soma press) as it chews they make themselves a support in heaven,
    make their reverence to Indra and Agni, and create the sun.

16. The stranger has milked the swelling refreshment, the nourishment
associated with the seven steps,
along with the seven rays of the sun.
17. O Mitra and Varuṇa, at the rising of the sun I take of the soma:
it is healing for the afflicted.
18. And it's just now that his place, the place of the delightful one, is to be
laid down:
he has stretched around heaven with his tongue.

VIII.73 (682) Aśvins

Gopavana Ātreya or Saptavadhri Ātreya
18 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas

Unified by its refrain, this hymn otherwise seems haphazardly structured, with standard straightforward appeals to the Aśvins to come to our sacrifice (e.g., vss. 1–2) alternating with undeveloped questions and statements (e.g., 11–12) and, more baffling, mythic allusions. The poorly understood story of the Aśvins' rescue of Atri is mentioned in verses 3 and 7–8, their relation to Saptavadhri in verse 9, and an unnamed figure, sometimes identified by commentators as Saptavadhri, is addressed in the final verses 17–18. The stories of Atri and Saptavadhri (who are sometimes considered to be the same person) have often been discussed, and radically incompatible plots have been reconstructed for them. See, for example, Jamison (1991: 212–46) and, more recently, Houben (2010), who discusses previous accounts. Houben emphatically rejects Jamison's version, and his own has some points in its favor but remains unconvincing in its entirety, at least to us.

1. Rise up for the man who acts according to truth; hitch up your chariot, o Aśvins.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
2. Drive here with your chariot that is quicker even than a wink, Aśvins.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
3. For Atri you made an underlayer with snow beneath the hot pot, o Aśvins.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

4. Where are you? Where have you gone? Where have you flown like falcons?
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
5. If today, at any time at all, you two should hear this call,
– let the help of you two become truly nearby.
6. The Aśvins, most often summoned on their journey, do I beg for closest friendship.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

7. You made a helpful house for Atri, o Aśvins.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
8. You obstruct the fire from burning, for Atri who speaks agreeably.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
9. Saptavadhri honed the blade of fire with hope.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

10. Come here, o you who bring bullish goods; hear this call of mine.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
11. What is this (deed?) of yours proclaimed in age-old fashion, like that of old men?
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
12. You have a common kinship, a common connection (with us), o Aśvins.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

13. Your chariot that drives through the airy realms, through the two world-halves, o Aśvins—
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
14. (With it) come here near to us with your thousands of cattle and horses.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
15. Do not overlook us with your thousands of cattle and horses.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

16. Breathing her ruddy breath, Dawn has appeared; following the truth she has made the light.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
17. Looking hard at the Aśvins, as a man with a hatchet does a tree—
– Let the help of your two become truly nearby.
18. Break (it) like a fortress, o bold one, you who were oppressed by the black clan.
– Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

VIII.74 (683) Agni (1–12), Śrutarvan Ārkṣya's Dānastuti (13–15)

Gopavana Ātreya
15 verses: mixed anuṣṭubh and gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas, with the first verse of each tṛca anuṣṭubh, the other two gāyatrī; final tṛca (13–15) all anuṣṭubh

This hymn consists of five tṛcas, each of which is thematically and syntactically unified. The first four (vss. 1–12) concentrate on the formal praise and invocation of Agni, who appears in three of the four (vss. 1–6, 10–12) insistently as the accusative object of the reverent approach of the worshipers. (The other tṛca, verses 7–9, has the worshiper's prayerful thought as its subject.)

Somewhat surprisingly, Agni is several times associated with a lexical and mythic complex far more characteristic of Indra: obstacle [/Vṛtra] smashing. Agni is called the best smasher of obstacles in verse 4, and the theme returns in verses 9 and 12. This association may have been triggered here by the identification of Agni as the tribal fire of the Anu (vs. 4), the group whose leader appears to be the poet's patron Śrutarvan (vss. 4, 13, 15). The tribal fire represents the (temporary) unification of separate groups of people generally mobilizing against outside threat, and an obstacle-smashing tribal fire would serve their purposes well. Although the unification theme is not insistent in the hymn, notice that the first verse begins by announcing Agni's affiliation with every clan, "dear to many" (vs. 1ab), and the joint invocation of Agni by various peoples is repeatedly mentioned (vss. 2, 6, 10, 12).

The final tṛca (vss. 13–15), with slightly different metrical structure, is the poet's dānastuti of Śrutarvan and his gift of four horses and a chariot. Though it is not as self-consciously clever as some dānastutis, verse 13 contains a nice pun.

1. The guest of every clan, dear to many, (shall we praise) on your behalf
   as (we) seek the prize;
   Agni belonging to the house shall I praise on your behalf, (with) speech
   and with thoughts of fortifying song—
2. (Agni), whom the peoples laud with their lauds like Mitra [/an ally],
   offering oblations to him whose potion is melted butter—
3. To Jātavedas, much to be admired, who raised to heaven
   the oblations lifted up among the conclave of the gods.

4. We have come to the best smasher of obstacles [/of Vṛtra], preeminent
   Agni [/the chief fire] belonging to the Anu,
   before whose face lofty Śrutarvan, the son of Ṛkṣa, flares up;
5. To immortal Jātavedas, lovely to see across the dark shades,
   receiving the ghee-oblation, worthy to be invoked;
6. To Agni, whom these peoples here urgently invoke with oblations,
   pouring offerings with their ladles held forth.

7. This newer thought here has been produced from us for you, o Agni,
   o delighting, well-born, strong-willed guest, unerring and wondrous.
8. Let it be most wealful, most pleasing, and dear to you, Agni.
   Well praised by it, grow strong.
9. Brilliance with its brilliance, it should set lofty fame upon fame
   at the smashing of obstacles [/Vṛtra].

10. (Him,) bestowing the chariot, the horse, and the cow, vibrant, a lord of
    settlements like Indra,
    whose claims to fame you [=priests] bring to triumph, and the one ever
    to be admired (whom) the separate peoples (hymn).
11. You whom Gopavana will please with his hymn, o Agni, o Aṅgiras,
    o pure one, hear our call.

12. You whom the peoples urgently invoke to win the prize,
    be attentive when it's the time for overcoming obstacles.

13. Being summoned to Śrutarvan the son of Ṛkṣa, who is roused to elation,
    I will swipe [=take] four head (of horses) as if swiping [=stroking/
    grooming] flocks of tufted (sheep).
14. The four swift runners of most powerful (Śrutarvan),
    along with a good chariot, will convey me to my pleasure, as birds
    conveyed the son of Tugra.
15. This is really true—what I forcefully point out to you, o great river
    Paruṣṇi:
    o waters, there exists no mortal who is a greater giver of horses than
    most powerful (Śrutarvan).

The next group of hymns, VIII.75–79, consists of one hymn to Agni (75), three to Indra (76–78), and one to Soma (79), in appropriately descending number of verses. The Indra hymns are all assigned to the same Kāṇva poet by the Anukramaṇī, but the other two hymns have different authors, 75 an Āṅgirasa, 79 a Bhārgava.

VIII.75 (684) Agni

Virūpa Āṅgirasa
16 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas

Agni's role in the sacrifice and his relationship with the poet-sacrificers is the subject of the first two conventional tṛcas (vss. 1–6), but a martial, indeed a belligerent, strain appears beginning with verse 7. The setting seems to be a contest for cattle or a cattle raid, and the poet calls on Agni to use his aggressive powers to defeat encroaching threats and assure victory and the winning of cattle and wealth (vss. 7–13). The hymn ends with general, and less combative, prayers for help for the sacrificer (vss. 14–16).

1. Harness your horses that best summon the gods, o Agni, like a
   charioteer.
   Take your seat as the primordial Hotar.
2. And as one who knows better, invite the gods for us, o god.
   Make our trust (in the sacrifice) into all things worth desiring,
3. Since you—o youngest one, o son of strength to whom offering is made—
   have become the one possessing the truth and worthy of the sacrifice.

4. This Agni here is the lord of the thousandfold prize and of the
   hundredfold;
   as sage poet he is the head of riches.

5. As craftsmen [/Ṛbhus] bend the felly, bend here, closer to the sacrifice,
with the shared invocations, o Aṅgiras [=Agni].
6. Now for him, for the heaven-bound bull, o Virūpa [=poet],
with your very own speech rouse your lovely praise hymn.

7. What Paṇi shall we lay low with his weapon, the weapon of Agni whose eye is not fooled,
when cattle are at stake?
8. Let not the clans of the gods, like rosy bathers [=Dawns],
leave us behind like cows a scrawny (calf).
9. Let not the coercion of anyone of evil intention and encompassing hatred
crash down on us, like a wave on a boat.

10. Homage to your power, Agni! The separate peoples hymn you, o god.
With your attacks shake our foe to pieces.
11. Surely you will toil for wealth for us, for our quest for cattle, Agni?
Make a wide (way) for us, you wide-maker.
12. Do not shun us in this (contest for) great stakes, any more than a burden-bearer would (his burden).
Win wealth as your takings.

13. Let this misfortune here follow some other one than us, to frighten him, o Agni.
Strengthen our power of attack.
14. (The man) who offers homage or is no stingy patron, whose ritual labor he [=Agni] has enjoyed—
him alone does Agni help with strengthening.
15. From beyond the distant boundary, cross over to the ones below,
where I am. Help them!

16. For we know of your help from of old, o Agni—help like that of a father—
and so we beg your favor.

VIII.76 (685) Indra

Kurusuti Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas

A simple hymn that never strays far from its twin themes: Indra accompanied by the Maruts and Indra drinking soma. The Maruts are mentioned as Indra's companions in each of the first nine verses, and the invitation to soma occupies the middle six verses (4–9), while the Vṛtra myth, glancingly alluded to, occupies much of the first tṛca. Only the last tṛca lacks mention of the Maruts.

The first verse of the last tṛca (10) appears to present the soma-drinking as accomplished, and Indra's role as Dasyu-smiter is celebrated in the next (11). The final verse of the hymn (12) is a meta-verse describing the production of the hymn itself. The numerological expression "eight-footed, nine-cornered" is, as Oldenberg suggests (*Noten* ad loc.), a reference to the gāyatrī tṛcas in which this hymn is composed, with eight-syllable lines arranged into three verses of three pādas each.

Although the hymn is simple, it makes implicit reference to a complex ritual development—that, in the course of the Ṛgvedic period, the Midday Pressing, originally dedicated entirely to Indra, made room for the Maruts as joint recipients of the soma with Indra. An important mythological treatment of this ritual innovation is found in I.165 and related hymns. Here we see only the liturgical result, an insistence on Indra Marutvant in a soma-drinking context.

1. This master of artifice here I now invoke, Indra, holding sway by his might,
accompanied by the Maruts—as if to twist (him here).
2. This Indra here, with the Maruts as comrades, split apart the head of Vṛtra
with a hundred-jointed mace.
3. Having grown strong, with the Maruts as comrades, Indra propelled Vṛtra apart,
releasing the waters of the sea.

4. Here he is—the one by whom in truth this sun was won,
by Indra, accompanied by the Maruts—to drink the soma.
5. Accompanied by the Maruts, possessing the silvery drink, mighty, conferring abundance—
Indra do we invoke with songs.
6. Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, we invoke with our age-old thought,
to drink of this soma here.

7. O Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, giver of rewards, drink the soma, you of a hundred resolves,
at this sacrifice here, much praised one.
8. Just for you, o Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, possessor of the stone, are the pressed soma-drinks,
provided with hymns, poured out with our whole heart.
9. Just drink, o Indra, with the Maruts as comrades, the pressed soma at the rituals of the day,
sharpening your mace with might.

10. Standing up with your might, you made your two lips shake after you had drunk
the pressed soma in the cup, Indra.

11. Both the world-halves yearned after you as you howled,
Indra, when you became the smiter of the Dasyus.
12. An eight-footed nine-cornered speech that touches the truth—
I have measured out its body because of Indra.

VIII.77 (686) Indra

Kurusuti Kāṇva
11 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas 1–9; bṛhatī 10, satobṛhatī 11, arranged in a pragātha

This hymn primarily treats the obscure Emuṣa myth, a boyhood deed of Indra's. As far as can be determined, in the Ṛgvedic version (there are later Vedic prose versions, e.g., Taittirīya Saṃhitā VI.2.4.2–3) the just-born Indra, after a brief dialogue with his mother, takes a bow named Bunda and kills a boar named Emuṣa, allowing him to capture (or Viṣṇu to capture for him) a special mess of rice porridge, as well as some buffalo, which he cooks for his father and mother. The most important (and essentially only) Ṛgvedic passages about this myth outside of VIII.77 are I.61.7, VIII.45.4–5, VIII.69.14–15, and VIII.96.2.

Our hymn begins with Indra's dialogue with his mother (vss. 1–2), a dialogue found in the same words in VIII.45.4–5. Since in that passage Indra takes the Bunda bow prior to questioning his mother, we can connect the first two verses of this hymn with the story in verses 6–8, even though the Bunda bow is not mentioned here in verses 1–2 and other material intervenes. Between the dialogue of verses 1–2 and the rest of the story starting in verse 6 are several references to other deeds of Indra's, at least one of them (vs. 5) even more obscure than the Emuṣa myth. It does seem likely, however, that the drinking of prodigious amounts of soma in verse 4 is part of the Emuṣa story: in III.48, also about Indra's boyhood and his relationship to mother and father, he consumes vast amounts of soma right after birth.

When the story is taken up again, we first are given a general summary of the myth in 6ab, and then the first incident in the story, the taking of the Bunda bow, in 6c. In our opinion, verse 8 is the speech of Indra's mother, urging him to capture the porridge by means of the bow. Her "just born right now" (vs. 8c) echoes the "just born" that begins verse 1, and these two phrases form a ring defining the Emuṣa story. Verse 7 continues the story of the Bunda bow and the aiming of the arrow. Verse 9, the final verse in the gāyatrī meter, is a standard summary of Indra's great deeds.

The last two verses (10–11) are in different meter. The first gives a précis of the myth, introducing Viṣṇu's role in securing the rice porridge, a detail that does not appear in accord with verse 6. The final pāda of verse 10 identifies Indra's opponent as a boar (no mention of the boar in the earlier verses) and in its final word provides the boar's name, Emuṣa, as the solution of the riddle. (The name Emuṣa occurs only here in the Ṛgveda.) The version given in verse 10 agrees better with the one in I.61.7 than it does with the treatment in the rest of this hymn and indeed in the rest of Maṇḍala VIII, which contains the other pertinent passages, and one wonders if the poet was trying to harmonize two versions that he knew of this myth by tacking the Viṣṇu verse onto the Viṣṇu-less version found in the gāyatrī portion of the hymn. The final verse (11) is a high rhetorical celebration of the Bunda bow and of Indra's arms that wield it.

1. Just born, the one of a hundred resolves asked his mother,
"Which ones are powerful; which ones are famed?"
2. Then she, the strong one [/Śavasī], named to him Aurṇavābha [/the spider's son] and Ahīśuva [/the one puffed up like a snake].
"Let them be (yours) to lay low, son."
3. The Vṛtra-smiter just hammered them together, like spokes in a nave with a hammer.
When grown up, he became smiter of Dasyus.

4. At one shot he drank thirty ponds at once,
hogsheads [?] of soma—(did) Indra.
5. He bored through to the Gandharva in the bottomless dusky realms,
to strengthen the composers of sacred formulations—(did) Indra.
6. He pierced (the boar Emuṣa), pierced the cooked rice porridge forth from the mountains, and held it fast.
Indra (took) the well-stretched Bunda-bow.

7. Your arrow with a hundred ruddy glints and a thousand feathers was the single one
that you made into your yokemate, o Indra.
8. [Indra's mother:] "With it [=Bunda-bow] bring to the praisers, to the superior men and to their ladies, (the rice porridge?) to eat,
though you were just born right now, o steadfast one of the Ṛbhus."
9. These highest exploits performed by you in profusion
you held fast with your whole heart.

10. All these things Viṣṇu brought here, the wide-striding one spurred on by you:
a hundred buffaloes, a rice porridge cooked in milk—(when) Indra (pierced) the boar Emuṣa.
11. Powerfully ruling, well-made, made of boar is your bow, the golden Bunda, that aims straight.
Your two arms are fit for battle, well-equipped, increasing injury even for one who protects himself from injury.

VIII.78 (687) Indra

Kurusuti Kāṇva
10 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas 1–9, bṛhatī 10

This hymn is all about greed. The first tṛca (vss. 1–3) barely mentions the offerings we make to Indra in the haste to list the things we want in return, down to the earrings in verse 3. The last tṛca (vss. 7–9) praises both Indra and Soma for their (potential) generosity, and verse 9 gives another list of desired gifts. Verse 10, in a different meter, may be the most egregious of all: the poet, picking up the desire he expressed for grain in verse 9, tells Indra he plans to do no labor for his grain, but expects Indra to deliver it, not only grown but processed—preferably stacked, but at least mown. So Indra is expected to serve as farmhand! This verse may indirectly express the stockbreeder's disdain for agriculture.

The middle tṛca (vss. 4–6) contrasts somewhat with its surroundings. Though the greed motif is found in verse 4, it is expressed in terms of Indra's unique powers to increase wealth, to win goods, and to give them. The rhetorical pattern set in this verse carries into the following verses, where the description of the god's powers becomes more general. However, the theme of the rest of the hymn is not far from the surface, for Indra's ability to see and to anticipate everything a mortal might do would allow him to identify proper recipients and deny gifts to those who behave badly.

1. (Taking pleasure) in the offering cake and of the soma-stalk, Indra, bring here to us a thousand
   and a hundred cows, o champion.
2. Bring here to us an ornament, a cow, a horse, an adornment,
   along with golden jewelry.
3. And bring here to us many earrings, bold one,
   for you are famed as a good one.

4. Never is another man within your abundance, Indra. There is no good winner and no good giver
   other than you for the cantor, o champion.
5. Never is Indra to be put down nor the able one to be circumvented.
   He hears and sees all.
6. Not to be outwitted, he watches out for the fury of mortals,
   watches out before the insult (comes).

7. Full of resolve is the belly of the powerful, (booty-)apportioning,
   Vṛtra-smiting drinker of soma.
8. In you are goods united and all auspicious things, o Soma,
   goods good for giving, not to go astray.

9. Just toward you does my desire hasten, seeking grain, seeking cattle, seeking gold,
   toward you, seeking horses.

10. With my hope on you, Indra, I never take scythe in hand.
    Supply us with grain by the handful, whether just mown or already stacked together, bounteous one.

VIII.79 (688) Soma

Kṛtnu Bhārgava
9 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 9, probably arranged in tṛcas

One of the rare hymns to Soma outside of the IXth Maṇḍala. None of the physical or ceremonial properties of soma the substance, the ritual drink, is found in this hymn. There is only indirect reference to the preparation of soma, in verse 3, where the "body-makers," presumably the priests who prepare the soma, are given shelter from hatred, and in verse 4 soma is called "possessor of the silvery (drink) [that is, soma itself]," an epithet otherwise almost exclusively used of Indra.

Instead of the ritual soma, we have here a portrait of an all-powerful and multi-talented divine helper: a winner (vs. 1), a poet (vs. 1), a healer (vs. 2), a giver (vs. 5), a finder of lost objects (vs. 6), and especially a protector from hostility (vss. 3, 4, 9). Only in verse 8 is there any hint that Soma might ever be anything but benevolent to us, but this hint is not developed.

1. Here is the effective gambler, ungraspable, all-conquering Soma, who got the lucky break—
   a seer, an inspired poet with poetic skill.
2. He covers over what is naked; he heals everything that is sick.
   The blind man sees; the lame sets forth.
3. O Soma, for those who create your body [=soma-pressers] you hold out a broad defense
   from the hateful things done by others.

4. You possessor of the silvery drink—through your perception, through your skills you keep away from heaven and earth
   the hatred of any evil man.
5. And when those with (ritual) tasks proceed to their tasks, they will surely reach the generosity of the giver,
   should they (manage to) deflect the desire of the thirsting man.
6. He finds what was previously lost; he raises up the man who follows truth.
   He lengthens our (as yet) untraversed lifetime.

7. Very kindly to us, merciful, of undistracted resolve, unquenchable—
   be weal for our heart, o Soma.
8. Don't agitate us, o Soma; don't frighten us, o king.
   Don't smite our heart with turmoil.
9. When I behold malevolent thoughts of the gods in my own seat,
   o king, ward off hateful things; you who give rewards, ward off failures.

The next group of hymns consists of 80–87, with three hymns to Indra (80–82), one to the All Gods (83), one to Agni (84), and three to the Aśvins (85–87), all but the last showing the appropriate descending number of verse. But 87 can in fact be broken into two original hymns, to produce the proper sequence. The poets named by the Anukramaṇī are various.

VIII.80 (689) Indra (1–9), Gods (10)

Ekadyū Naudhasa
10 verses: gāyatrī, probably arranged in tṛcas, except final verse, triṣṭubh 10

The final pāda of this hymn (10d) is the same as the refrain in the verbally clever and finely structured hymns of Nodhas Gautama in Maṇḍala I (I.58, 60–64). (Ṛgveda I.59 is also attributed to him, but lacks the refrain; see also nearby VIII.88.) The patronymic of our poet (Naudhasa) identifies him as a descendant of Nodhas, and he seems to have inherited some of his ancestor's skill: the tone of the hymn is light and slangy, and he addresses Indra informally and with mocking exasperation, especially in the second tṛca (vss. 4–6), in which the poet complains that Indra has been slow to help his chariot in the race (see also vs. 8).

The poet seems to be withholding his highest praise for Indra until Indra has earned it. He begins the hymn by announcing that he hasn't chosen anyone else for certain as his mercy-giver, and invites Indra to show mercy. He ends the hymn proper (vs. 9) with a promise that Indra *will be* proclaimed as lord after he "makes his fourth sacrificial name." What these four names are is not at all certain, but we suggest that the phrase forms a ring with the first verse, where the title/name "mercy-giver" hasn't yet been bestowed on the god. The poet is thus urging Indra to perform the actions that will earn him the names that will attract sacrifice and praise from mortals.

In the final verse, in a different meter, the poet names himself and reminds all the gods (and goddesses, an unusual inclusion) that he has performed service for them, demanding appropriate recompense.

1. Because I have not made anyone else my for-certain dispenser of mercy,
   o you of a hundred resolves,
   be merciful to us, Indra.

2. You who, not shirking, in the past, time after time, helped us to win
   the prize,
   be merciful to us, Indra.
3. Are you really one who rouses even the feeble, who are the helper of the
   soma-presser?
   Will you indeed muster your ability for us?

4. O Indra, possessor of the stone, advance our chariot even when it is behind;
   put it in front for me.
5. Blast it! Are you just going to sit there now? Put our chariot first
   for utmost fame that seeks the prize.
6. Help our chariot that seeks the prize. Easy for you to do. Why this
   runaround?
   Just make us victorious!

7. Indra, stand fast. You are a stronghold. The lucky woman goes to a
   rendezvous with you—
   this visionary thought conforming to her season [/the ritual sequence].
8. Don't make it [=chariot?] share in disgrace: the racecourse is wide, the
   stake is set;
   the elbows have been twisted outward [=driving posture?].
9. When you will make your fourth sacrificial name—this we eagerly
   desire—
   after that you will be solemnly proclaimed as our lord.

10. Ekadyū has strengthened you, you immortals; he has invigorated you,
    you gods and you who are goddesses.
    To him show generosity to be praised. – Early in the morning—soon—
    he should come, acquiring goods through his insight.

VIII.81 (690) Indra

Kusīdin Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Though assigned to a different poet, this hymn, like the last one (VIII.81), addresses Indra with a certain irreverence and informality, with multiple demands that Indra seize goods and bring them to us, in addition to the usual praise of his power and generosity. One verse is somewhat puzzling: the middle verse (5), in which Indra seems to participate in the ritual in priestly roles as well as being the object of worship, but this theme is not pursued.

1. Grab for us here a brilliant cattle-rich handful, o Indra,
   who have great hands, with your right one.

2. For we know you as powerfully ranging, of powerful gifts, of powerful bounty,
of powerful mass, with your help.
3. For when you wish to give, o champion, neither gods nor mortals
hinder you, anymore than they would a fearsome bull.

4. Come now! Let us praise Indra, the sovereign king who holds sway over goods.
He will not neglect us with his generosity.
5. He will start up the praise; he will join in the singing; he will listen to the sāman being sung.
He will greet it with generosity.
6. Bring to us with your right hand; seize with your left.
Indra, don't deal us out of goods.

7. Hop to! Bring here boldly, bold one, for the peoples
the possessions of the very impious.
8. Indra, the prize that now is yours is to be won by the inspired poets.
Win it with us.
9. Your all-glittering prizes come speeding in an instant to us.
They awaken at our will and right away.

VIII.82 (691) Indra

Kusīdin Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn is an insistent invitation to the soma sacrifice, punctuated by imperatives: "run," "come here," "drink," and so forth, and larded with descriptions of the soma in various stages of preparation. It is simple in diction and entirely focused on the ritual situation and the hope for Indra's arrival, save for the last verse (9), which alludes briefly to the myth of the stealing of soma from heaven. The last tṛca is marked by a refrain.

1. Run here from afar and from nearby, Vṛtra-smiter,
in response to the proffering of the honey.
2. Sharp are the soma-drinks. Come here! The pressed drinks are ready to exhilarate.
Drink heartily as you are accustomed.
3. Become exhilarated on the refreshment, and then in accord with your desire and your fervor
it will become weal for your heart, Indra.

4. You without rival—here, come here! You are being called down to the hymns
(while you are) in the highest luminous realm of heaven.

5. For you this one here has been pressed by stones, prepared with cows [=milk], for exhilaration.
The soma is being poured forth, Indra.
6. Indra, hear my call. Reach the drinking and satiety
of the soma that has been pressed among us and provided with cows.

7. Indra, the soma in the beakers and in the cups that has been pressed for you—
drink of it. You are master of it.
8. The soma that is seen in the cups, like the moon in the waters—
drink of it. You are master of it.
9. That which the falcon brought to you with his foot across the airy realms—the one that could not be recaptured—
drink of it. You are master of it.

VIII.83 (692) All Gods

Kusīdin Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

The first two tṛcas (vss. 1–6) of this hymn to the All Gods mention only the Ādityas and are quite straightforward. The poet praises the help of these gods in the first tṛca (vss. 1–3) and asks for valuables in the second (vss. 4–6). The final tṛca turns to other gods (see esp. vs. 7) and to a more interesting topic: the ultimate kinship of gods and men (vss. 7–8). The gods are reminded of this relationship presumably to stimulate them to give help and goods.

1. We would choose the great help of the gods,
of the bulls, to aid us.
2. Let them be our yokemates always—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
and forethoughtful strengtheners.
3. You carry us across many perils [?], as if across the waters with boats—
you charioteers of truth.

4. Let there be a treasure for us, o Aryaman; a treasure worthy of praise, o Varuṇa,
for we would choose a treasure.
5. For you forethoughtful ones, who care for the stranger, are holding sway over a treasure.
What belongs to evil (shall) not (reach) it, o Ādityas.
6. O you of good gifts, we, whether dwelling peacefully or traveling on our route,
call upon you, gods, for strengthening.

7. O Indra, Viṣṇu, Maruts, Aśvins—of these your common births with us
take cognizance.

8. You of good gifts, now once again in the same way we bring to the fore
   our brotherhood with you
   in the womb of our mother.
9. For you of good gifts, with Indra preeminent—you are heaven-sent.
   And so I call just upon you.

VIII.84 (693) Agni

Uśanā Kāvya
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This short and simple hymn to Agni makes no reference to his fiery qualities, and only glancing ones to his ritual role: as guest in our houses (vs. 1) set here by the gods (vs. 2). The most salient aspect of the hymn is the series of questions it contains: in the second tṛca (vss. 4–6) the poet asks what services we should perform for Agni and how we should perform them (vss. 4–5); the final tṛca (vss. 7–10) again begins with a question (vs. 7), this time about which poet is the recipient of Agni's poetic stimulation. The poet is clearly concerned with producing the proper praise for the god; he mentions hymns or praises in verses 3–7.

The Anukramaṇī names as the poet the legendary and mythic figure Uśanā Kāvya, to whom the three hymns IX.87–89 are also attributed. It is not clear why, save for the mention of the *kaví* "sage poet" in verse 2.

1. The dearest guest will I praise for you—dear like an ally—
   Agni, worth acquiring like a chariot,
2. Him, discerning like a sage poet, whom the gods now once again
   have set down among mortals.
3. You, youngest one—protect pious men; listen to their hymns.
   Guard their lineage along with their life.

4. In what fashion (shall we present) a praise invocation to you, o Agni,
   Aṅgiras, child of nourishment,
   (fit) for your desire, your fervor?
5. With our mind on what sacrifice might we do pious service, o youthful
   (son) of strength?
   And what shall I speak as homage here?
6. So that then you will make all dwellings lovely for us
   and make our hymns have riches as their prize.

7. Whose thoughts in profusion do you now quicken, o houselord—
   the man whose hymns are (presented) to you at the winning of
   cattle?

8. They groom him, the very resolute one who goes in front at the
   contests,
   the prizewinner, in their own dwelling places.
9. He dwells peacefully in peaceful ways that bring success—whom no one
   smites, but who himself smites.
   O Agni, whoever is rich in heroes thrives.

VIII.85 (694) Aśvins

Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Renou (*EVP* XVI: 68) deems this hymn "elementary," and indeed the hymn reduces the divine–human interaction to its simplest dimensions—the refrain promising the gods ritual offerings and the rest of the verse sketching the poet's invitation, the gods' journey, and the returns desired. The poet identifies himself twice (vss. 3–4).

1. Come to my call, o Nāsatyas, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
2. Hear this praise song of mine, Aśvins, this call of mine,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
3. This Kṛṣṇa is calling you, o Aśvins whose goods are prizewinning
   mares,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.

4. Hear the call of Kṛṣṇa the praising singer, o men,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
5. Extend undeceivable protection to the praising poet, o men,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
6. Go to the house of the pious man who praises just so, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.

7. Hitch the donkey to the chariot whose parts are solid, o you who bring
   bullish goods,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
8. With your triply-turning chariot with its three chariot boxes drive here, o
   Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
9. Now promote my hymns, o Nāsatyas, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.

VIII.86 (695) Aśvins

Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa or Viśvaka Kārṣṇi
5 verses: jagatī

This hymn clearly depicts a precise situation, with the poet Viśvaka making a direct appeal to the Aśvins, but the particular nature of the situation is difficult to ascertain. The two named men, Viśvaka and Viṣṇāpū, are found together three times elsewhere, always in Aśvin context. In nearly identical Kakṣīvant passages (I.116.23, 117.7) the Aśvins "gave" (*dadathuḥ*) Viṣṇāpū to Kr̥ṣṇiya Viśvaka (Viṣṇāpū compared to "a lost herd-animal" in 116.23); in X.65.12 they "let loose" (*áva sr̥jathuḥ*) Viṣṇāpū to Viśvaka. The first verb occurs twice in our hymn (2b, 3b), though not with a personal object; the other verb has a close synonym (*mumócatam* "release") in the refrain of all five verses. Thus, our hymn seems roughly to conform to the other Ṛgvedic occurrences of these personae. Unfortunately this is all we know of the story: neither of the named men occurs in later texts, and though Geldner provides a contextualizing narrative, himself relying on Sāyaṇa, with Viśvaka the "grieved and deserted" (*betrübte und verlassene*) father who catches sight of his son, a poet who had gone far away to seek his fortune, there is no real evidence for this plot in the Ṛgvedic passages—not even for the father–son relationship. Like many of the Aśvin myths it is intriguing and probably ultimately unknowable.

The Viśvaka/Viṣṇāpū episode seems only to occupy the first three verses, which may form a tr̥ca, as Oldenberg suggests (*Noten* ad loc.). The last two verses (4–5) retain the final-pāda refrain (of vss. 1–3), but omit the repeated c-pāda with its mention of Viśvaka. The appeal to Indra for help (vs. 4) and the praise of truth (vs. 5) seem loosely attached to the rest of the hymn.

1. Since both of you are wondrous healers, embodying joy, and both of you are (men) of skill and of speech,
   Viśvaka calls upon you at the making of bodies [=sons?]. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him? [=Viṣṇāpū?])!
2. How shall one of expansive mind now offer praise to you? You two have given insight (to me? Viṣṇāpū?) to seek a better state.
   Viśvaka calls upon you at the making of bodies. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!
3. Since you two have given this radiance to Viṣṇāpū to seek a better state, o you who provide many enjoyments,
   Viśvaka calls upon you at the making of bodies. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!

4. And this hero, the winner of spoils and possessor of the silvery drink [=Indra], do we call upon for help, even though he is at a distance,
   upon him whose favor is sweetest like that of a father. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!
5. By truth god Savitar performs his labors; the horn of truth is extended widely.
   The truth overpowers even those doing great battle. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!

VIII.87 (696) Aśvins

Dyumnīka Vāsiṣṭha or Priyamedha Āṅgirasa or Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī arranged in pragāthas

A typical and rather banal Aśvin hymn, with the simple message "come here, drink the soma, give us aid and goods," although there are a few striking images, especially in verse 1.

As Oldenberg (1888: 217) points out, this six-verse hymn, following a five-verse hymn, violates the proper order, but, as he also points out, the first two pragāthas are parallel in structure and phraseology, and may well form one four-verse hymn, with the final pragātha (vss. 5–6) an originally separate hymn. Detaching the last verses would restore an acceptable order, with a five-verse hymn (86), followed by four- and two-verse hymns.

1. Brilliant is the praise song for you two, o Aśvins, like a blood-red (horse) [?] at its outpouring. Come here!
   This (outpouring) of pressed honey is dear to heaven, o men. Drink like buffaloes at a salt-pocket.
2. Drink the honeyed hot milk, o Aśvins; sit here on the ritual grass, o men.
   Reaching exhilaration here in the dwelling of Manu, protect our vital energy along with our property.

3. The Priyamedhas have called you here with all your forms of help.
   Drive your course right up to the pleasing sacrifice of the man who has twisted the ritual grass at the rituals of daybreak.
4. Drink the honeyed soma, o Aśvins; sit close together on the ritual grass.
   Having grown strong, come from heaven right up to our good praise, like buffaloes to a salt-pocket.

5. Now drive here with your horses frothing at the mouth, o Aśvins.
   O wondrous ones of golden course, o lords of beauty, strong through truth, drink the soma.
6. Because we inspired poets in our admiration call upon you to win the prize,
   you two, agreeable, wondrous, and possessed of many wonders—come here with insight and attentive hearing, o Aśvins.

Oldenberg groups the four Indra hymns 88–91 together, though their numbers of verses do not conform to the expected sequence.

VIII.88 (697) Indra

Nodhas Gautama
6 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn is attributed by the Anukramaṇī to Nodhas Gautama, the skillful poet of I.58–64, whose descendant Ekadyū Naudhasa is the purported author of nearby VIII.80, which utilized the Nodhas Gautama refrain. This refrain is not found in this hymn, though the most striking word in the refrain, *makṣú* "soon, right away," does appear in verse 2. And in verse 4 the Gotamas are identified as creators of the chant being presented to Indra in phraseology very close to that used in the Nodhas Gautama hymns in Maṇḍala I (esp. I.61.16, but also I.60.5, I.63.9, I.62.13).

The hymn contains the usual mixture of praise for Indra's overwhelming might and pleas for his largesse. The poet uses Indra's unconstrained powers as an argument for his exercising generosity (see esp. vss. 3, 6). It is a well-crafted and pleasing piece; however, whether it is a part of the oeuvre of the Nodhas of Maṇḍala I is difficult to determine on stylistic grounds.

1. To him, the wondrous, vanquishing with his attack, becoming exhilarated from the good stalk,
   to Indra do we bellow with our hymns on your behalf, like milk-cows in good pastures to their calf.
2. The heaven-ruling one of good drops, swathed in powers, much nourishing like a mountain
   do we beseech for a prize rich in livestock, hundredfold, thousandfold, consisting of cattle—right away.

3. The high, hard rocks do not obstruct you, Indra.
   When you wish to give goods to a praiser like me, no one confounds this (intention) of yours.
4. As a battler with resolve, vast power, and wondrous skill, you surmount all created things with your might.
   This chant here will turn you hither for help, the chant which the Gotamas have generated.

5. Because you project beyond the limits of heaven with your strength,
   the earthly realm does not contain you, Indra. You have waxed strong following your independent power.
6. There is no constriction of your bounty, bounteous one, when you show favor to the pious man.
   Become the stimulator of our speech, most munificent, for the winning of prizes.

VIII.89 (698) Indra

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa and Purumedha Āṅgirasa
7 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas 1–4; anuṣṭubh 5–6, bṛhatī 7, arranged in a tṛca

The signature word of this hymn is *bṛhánt* "lofty": it is the first and last word of the hymn, and appears in every verse except the two anuṣṭubh verses (5–6). (Note that the names of the other two meters in the hymn, bṛhatī and satobṛhatī, contain a form of this word as well.) The theme of the hymn is the Vṛtra battle and the singing of the Maruts that strengthens and inspires Indra for the battle. The middle verse (4) is quite possibly the Maruts' direct address to Indra, the sacred formulation (*bráhman*—note the phonological similarity to *bṛhánt*) mentioned in the previous verse (3).

The hymn begins and ends with an exhortation to produce a song or hymn for Indra. In verse 1 it is explicitly the Maruts who are thus urged (so also vs. 3), but in the last half of verse 7 the addressees are not identified (though they must be plural, unlike the singular "you" of 7ab). This lack of referent allows the verse to be interpreted in two ways—as a further address to the Maruts or as an address to the human poets—and this in turn allows the Maruts and the poets to be identified with each other and allows the current ritual to acquire the resonance of a divine correspondent. The ritual context is clear from the beginning: in verse 1 the generation of the light suggests the dawn sacrifice; in 6ab the creation of the sacrifice and its elements are Indra's recompense for his cosmogonic deeds; and in 7cd the mention of the heated gharma pot evokes a particular ritual, the Pravargya, which involves heating milk to boiling—milk that may be indirectly alluded to in 7a.

The hymn is also notable for what it lacks: any request for aid or riches. It is that very rare thing in the Ṛgveda, a pure hymn of praise. It is also nicely crafted, with balanced rhetorical responsions and variations and phonological and morphological play throughout, in deceptively direct and simple language.

1. For Indra, o Maruts, sing the lofty (sāman) that best smites Vṛtra,
   with which those who are strong through truth [=Maruts or gods] gave birth to the light, god(like) and wakeful, for the god.
2. The smiter of malediction blew away the interdictions. Then brilliant Indra was at hand.
   The gods yielded themselves to partnership with you, Indra—you of lofty radiance, with the Maruts as your flock.

3. To lofty Indra, o Maruts, chant your sacred formulation.
   He will smite Vṛtra—the Vṛtra-smiter of a hundred resolves—with his mace of a hundred joints.
4. [Maruts:] "Bear down boldly, you of bold mind: there will be lofty fame for you.
   Let the waters, the mothers, flow apart at speed. You will smite Vṛtra; you will win the sun."

5. When you were born for the smiting of Vṛtra, you bounteous one without predecessor,
   then you spread out the earth, and then you propped up heaven.
6. Then the sacrifice was born for you, then the chant and (the fire's) "laughter."
   You dominate all this, what has been born and what is to be born.
7. You brought the cooked (milk) into the raw (cows); you made the sun mount in heaven.
   [To singers/Maruts:] Like the gharma pot when the sāman (is sung), heat the lofty (song) enjoyable to the one who yearns for song, with its well-twisted ornaments.

VIII.90 (699) Indra

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa and Purumedha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Indra as the powerful smiter of obstacles is called to our sacrifice and begged for aid in battle and for riches. There is nothing particularly remarkable in this hymn except for verse 5, where there appears to be an obscure reference to Varuṇa as the "sustainer of domains," who concedes various unopposable obstacles to Indra. This epithet, *carṣaṇī-dhṛ́t*, is actually more often used of Indra than of other gods, but Varuṇa is also so called (IV.1.2, twice), and a telling passage, VII.85.3, describes an amicable division of labor between Indra, who smashes unopposable obstacles, and Varuṇa, who sustains the peoples, in almost identical phraseology to our verse 5. What then does "concede" mean in our passage? Most likely, in our view, that Varuṇa concedes the sphere of warfare and martial defense to Indra, while continuing to perform his own task of assuring orderly existence in times and places of peace.

1. Let Indra, who is to be invoked, tend to all our battles.
   Let the Vṛtra-smiter attend upon our sacred formulations and our pressings—he who has the highest overwhelming power, who is equal to song.
2. You are the foremost giver of bounties; you are the real thing, the one who performs the master's part.
   We would choose to be the associates of the powerfully brilliant son of strength, of the great one.

3. The unsurpassable sacred formulations are being performed for you, o Indra who yearn for song.
   Take pleasure in these "teams," o possessor of fallow bays, which we have thought up for you, Indra.

4. For you, bounteous one, the real thing who cannot be bowed, bear down on many obstacles.
   You, o strongest one with mace in hand—bring wealth nearby for the pious man.

5. You, Indra, are the glorious possessor of the silvery drink, o lord of strength.
   You, all alone, smite the unopposable obstacles that have been conceded by the one who sustains the domains [=Varuṇa?].
6. You, o lord, the forethoughtful one, do we now beseech for bounty, as we would beseech Bhaga for a portion.
   Your shelter is like a great hide, Indra. May your benevolent thoughts reach us.

VIII.91 (700) Indra

Apālā Ātreyī
7 verses; paṅkti 1–2, anuṣṭubh 3–7

This deceptively simple, and much discussed, hymn consists of a monologue embedded in a charm for healing and fertility. Unusually the speaker is an unmarried girl, who undertakes a clandestine soma ritual for Indra, with erotic overtones, in ultimate preparation for her marriage. It begins with a contextualizing introduction (vs. 1a–c): a maiden going to fetch water finds soma on her way. She brings it home and addresses first the soma and then Indra. She announces to soma her intention to press it (1de): as it turns out she presses it with her own mouth (2c) and offers it to Indra along with all the accoutrements of a real soma sacrifice (vs. 2). Indra arrives for the soma, and she seeks to understand his intentions, even as she assures him that she will keep his presence a secret (3ab). The lexeme translated "recite" (*ádhi √i*) is an item of pedagogical vocabulary, appropriate to her age and stage of life, and refers to students' oral recitation of their lessons; in this context it seems to mean "reveal your presence verbally." She then urges the soma to flow softly, in contrast to the excessive noise usually associated with soma's preparation (3cd). In verse 4 she tremulously speculates to herself about whether Indra will be able to achieve what she wants from her private soma-pressing, and worries, as an adolescent girl apprehensive about sexuality and marriage, about sexual intercourse with Indra, a rather formidable first sexual partner, one might think. In the next two verses (5–6) she expresses her wishes—three different types of hair growth: on the fields, that is, plants; on her father's bald head; and on her "belly," the last wish indicating a desire for pubic hair as a sign of sexual maturity. Apālā's words end here; the final verse says nothing directly about whether Indra fulfilled her expressed wishes (though we take it as implying that he did), but simply states that he purified her by pulling

her through increasingly smaller holes, rendering her "sun-skinned," quite possibly a reference to the curing of teenage acne, a frequent accompaniment to the entry into sexual maturity.

This Ṛgvedic hymn is extensively quoted and embedded in a prose narrative in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (I.220–21). For detailed discussion of this hymn and its middle Vedic version, see Jamison (1991: 149–51, 165–67). That account and this translation are deeply indebted to and dependent upon the ground-breaking discussion by Hanns-Peter Schmidt in chapter 1 "The Affliction of Apālā (Ṛgveda 8.91)" in his 1987 *Some Women's Rites and Rights in the Veda* (pp. 1–29).

1. A maiden going down to the water found soma along the way.
   Bringing it home she said, "I will press you for Indra; I will press you for the able one.
2. "You over there, the dear little hero who goes earnestly looking from house to house,
   drink this (soma), pressed by the jaws—(soma) accompanied by grain, by gruel, by cakes, by hymns.
3. "We wish to comprehend you; we will not 'recite' you aloud.
   Softly-like, ever so softly-like, o drop, flow around for Indra.
4. "Will he be able? Will he do it? Will he make us better off?
   Shall we, though coming as husband-haters, unite with Indra?
5. "Indra, make these three surfaces grow forth—
   the head of my Papa, the field, and this on my belly.
6. "That field of ours, this body of mine,
   and my Papa's head—make all these hairy."
7. In the nave of a chariot, in the nave of a wagon, in the nave of a yoke, o Indra of a hundred resolves,
   having purified Apālā three times, you made (her) sun-skinned.

The next three hymns, 92–94, should be grouped together, according to Oldenberg (1888: 218).

VIII.92 (701) Indra

Śrutakakṣa Āṅgirasa or Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
33 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, arranged in tṛcas

This long, loosely structured hymn is essentially a constantly repeated invitation to Indra to come to the soma sacrifice. Although the poet does ask for aid from time to time, the focus is on the sacrifice, the verbal accompaniments, and the soma itself. The poet names himself (or nicknames himself: the name is Śrutakakṣa "having a famous armpit" [or a famous crotch]) in verse 25. This nickname appears in the midst of a striking sequence using the adverb *áram* "fitting(ly)" (vss. 24–27) in a clever shift implicitly equating Indra's body parts (e.g., "fit for your cheek" vs. 24a) with the gifts the poet hopes to receive (e.g., "fit for a horse" vs. 25a), at least once punningly: verse 35c, where the word *dhā́mane* can refer both to a body part, the "fundament," that is, the buttocks, and to Indra's conferring of gifts.

1. Sing (him) here to the drinking of your stalk; sing forth to Indra,
   the all-conquering one, of a hundred resolves, most liberal to the settled domains,
2. Much-invoked, much-praised leader of song, famed of old—
   call him, "Indra!"
3. It's Indra who is the giver to us of great prizes, the dancer.
   The great one, in a crouch [=driving posture], will guide (the prizes) here.

4. The belipped one has drunk of the stalk conferring good skill,
   accompanied by oblations,
   of the drop mixed with grain—has Indra.
5. Chant forth to him, to Indra, to drink the soma,
   for that is his strengthening.
6. Having drunk of this god here, of his exhilarating drinks, the god with his power
   will surmount all beings.

7. Him, entirely victorious, held in place amid all your hymns
   you will rouse for help—
8. The soma-drinker who is an unassailable fighter who cannot be budged,
   a superior man of unobstructable resolve.
9. Do your best for wealth for us, as one knowing many things, o Indra, you who are equal to song.
   Help us in the decisive (contest for) spoils.

10. Even from yonder, Indra, drive up close to us with hundred-prized, thousand-prized refreshment.
11. Let's go to the visionary thoughts of our visionary poet; with (the thoughts as) our steeds, o able one who breaks out the cows,
    might we conquer in battles, o possessor of the mace.
12. We will make you take pleasure in our hymns, o you of a hundred resolves,
    as cows do in their pastures.

13. Because all things in the mortal way are in accord with your desire, o you of a hundred resolves,
    we have arrived at our hopes, possessor of the mace.

14. To you, o son of strength, the desirers of desires have turned.
Nothing surpasses you, Indra.
15. O bull, give aid to us with the awesome, dashing
visionary thought that gains the most, and with plenitude.

16. O Indra of a hundred resolves, that which now is the most brilliant exhilaration for you,
with that you should now become exhilarated on the exhilarating drink—
17. That of yours which possesses the brightest fame, which is the best smiter of Vṛtra, Indra,
that exhilaration which best gives strength.
18. For we know what of yours was given by you—possessor of the stone, real drinker of soma—
to all communities, wondrous one.

19. Let our hymns encircle with rhythm the soma pressed for Indra for exhilaration.
Let the bards chant their chant.
20. He in whom are all splendors, in whom the seven who sit together [=priests] take pleasure,
Indra do we invoke when the soma is pressed.
21. The gods have stretched for themselves a noteworthy sacrifice among the Trikadrukas.
Just him [=Indra] let our hymns increase.

22. Let the drops enter you, like rivers the sea.
Nothing surpasses you, Indra.
23. O wakeful bull, with your greatness you encompass the portion of soma that is in your belly, Indra.
24. Let the soma be fit for your cheek, o Indra, Vṛtra-smiter,
fit for your "fundament" the drops.

25. Śrutakakṣa ["Famous Armpit"] sings fit for a horse, fit for a cow,
fit for the "fundament" [/bestowal] of Indra.
26. For fittingly you exert yourself when our soma drinks are pressed, Indra,
fittingly for your giving, able one.
27. Even from a distance our hymns reach you, possessor of the stone.
Let us go fittingly to you.

28. For as surely as you are one who acts the hero and as surely as you are a steadfast champion,
just as surely is your thought to be realized—

29. Just as surely has your giving, powerfully liberal one, been ordained by all the Ordainers.
And so, Indra, (you are) in partnership with me.
30. Do not become like an indolent formulator, o lord of prizes.
Exhilarate yourself on the pressed soma accompanied by cows [=milk].

31. Let not (ill) intentions toward us guide us away from the sun into the nights, Indra.
With you as yokemate, we would gain it.
32. With just you as yokemate, Indra, we would respond to the challengers.
You are ours; we are yours.
33. For those seeking you, ever bellowing after you, will proceed just to you—
your comrades, the bards, o Indra.

VIII.93 (702) Indra (except Indra and Ṛbhus 34)

Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
34 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This long hymn begins with an address to the rising sun (vs. 1), which is echoed in the first verse of the second tṛca (vs. 4), and near its end are two verses directed to Agni (vss. 25–26). These paired addresses to other deities within an Indra hymn suggest the ritual context of a dawn soma sacrifice (though Dawn herself is not alluded to). Indeed, the soma offered to Indra is the dominant theme of the hymn, which becomes more insistent as the hymn progresses. Not surprisingly, mention of the aid and material wealth he will give in return for the soma is also not scanted.

Throughout the hymn Indra is especially celebrated as (best) Vṛtra-smiter: the simple epithet and its superlative form occur an astonishing nine times, even though the myth itself is treated only sparingly (vss. 2, 7, 14–15).

As often, the tṛcas become more tightly organized toward the end of the hymn, with a partial refrain in verses 25–27, and full-pāda refrains in 28–30 and 31–33, the latter being introduced (31a) by the same pāda that provides the refrain (31–33c). There are also intra- and inter-tṛca verbal echoes in these later verses. The separate final verse (34) mentioning the Ṛbhus seems to have little or no connection to the rest of the hymn.

1. Up toward the bull whose bounty is famous, who performs manly work,
toward the archer do you go, o Sun.
2. He who split the nine and ninety strongholds with his arm-strong (mace),
and as Vṛtra-smiter smote the serpent,
3. That Indra, propitious companion, will milk out for us (wealth) in horses, in cows, in grain,
like (a cow) yielding a broad stream.

4. O Vṛtra-smiter—whatever today you have risen over, o Sun,
all that is under *your* will, Indra.
5. Or if, o lord of settlements grown strong, you think, "I shall not die,"
just that comes true for you.
6. The soma drinks which have been pressed in the distance, which nearby,
to all those do you go, Indra.

7. We incite this Indra to smite great Vṛtra.
He will become a bullish bull.
8. Indra is the one made for giving. Strongest is he when ensconced in exhilaration;
brilliant is he who, deserving of soma, receives the (invitatory) call.
9. Like a mace equipped with a hymn, powerful, not to be budged,
he has waxed high, not to be laid low.

10. Even in difficult going, make easy passage for us when you are hymned,
o Indra who yearn for hymns,
if you will so desire, bounteous one—
11. You whose aim, whose sovereignty they never confound—
neither god, nor the exalted folk.
12. And the two goddesses, both the World-Halves,
respect your unrepulsable forcefulness, o you of good lips.

13. You fixed this fast in the black (cows) and in the reddish ones,
and in the gray ones—the gleaming white milk.
14. Then as all the gods strode away from the turbulent power of the serpent,
the onslaught of the wild beast found them.
15. And after that he became a covering for me: the Vṛtra-smiter displayed his masculine nature—
he for whom no rival has been born, he who cannot be laid low.

16. Him famed as the best smiter of Vṛtra, the propelling force of the settled peoples,
do I inspire to great generosity to you (patrons).
17. (I inspired you, Indra,) with this visionary thought and with desire for cattle—o you of many names, praised by many—
so that you appeared at every soma-pressing.
18. Let him be of attentive mind just toward us—the Vṛtra-smiter possessing many pressed drinks.
Let the able one listen to our prayer.

19. (Coming) with what help for us do you reach exhilaration, bull?
With what (help) for the pressers? Bring it here!
20. In whose pressed soma does the bullish bull with his teams take pleasure,
the Vṛtra-smiter, for soma-drinking?

21. On reaching exhilaration, (bring) wealth in thousands to us.
Become a provider to the pious man.

22. These pressed drinks here, accompanied by their wives [=waters], go eagerly in pursuit.
Regularly coming, ever filling [?] is (the wave) of the waters.
23. The desirable [/offered] libations, strengthening Indra at the ceremony, have surged
to his down-stroke with their power.
24. Hither let these two feasting companions, the pair of fallow bays with golden manes,
convey (you) to the pleasure set out (for you).

25. For you have these soma drinks here been pressed and the ritual grass strewn, o you of radiant goods [=Agni].
Convey Indra hither for the praisers—
26. (Agni,) as you diffuse your skill through the luminous realms and distribute treasures to the pious man.
(All of you,) recite to Indra for the praisers.
27. I establish here your Indrian strength and set out all solemn words for you, o you of a hundred resolves.
Be merciful, Indra, to the praisers.

28. Bring us every good thing, every refreshment and nourishment, o you of a hundred resolves,
when you will show us mercy, Indra.
29. Bring us all welfare, o you of a hundred resolves,
when you will show us mercy, Indra.
30. We who have pressed soma call upon just you, best smiter of Vṛtra,
when you will show us mercy, Indra.

31. Right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays—drive, o lord of exhilarating drinks—
right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays.
32. He who is known, now as before, as Indra, best smiter of Vṛtra, possessing a hundred resolves—
right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays.
33. For you, Vṛtra-smiter, are the drinker of these soma-drinks—
right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays.

34. Let Indra give us the wealth belonging to craft [/Ṛbhu] as the craftsmaster [/Ṛbhukṣan] for our refreshment.
Let the prizewinner give a prizewinner.

VIII.94 (703) Maruts

Bindu Āṅgirasa or Pūtadakṣa Āṅgirasa
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn, focused on soma-drinking, is a curious mix of almost vapid simplicity and baffling obscurity. Although the Anukramaṇī assigns the whole hymn to the Maruts, it has several features that deviate markedly from the general pattern of Marut hymns. To begin with the clearest, the second tṛca (vss. 4–6) names a number of gods as drinkers of the soma being presented: not only the Maruts (vs. 4), but the Aśvins (vs. 4), Indra (vs. 6), and the Ādityas, both as a body (vs. 4) and separately (vs. 5). By contrast, in the remaining tṛcas (vss. 7–9, 10–12) only the Maruts are mentioned, but they are several times qualified by epithets and actions that are ordinarily the province of other gods: for example, "having refined skill" (vss. 7 and 10), generally used of one or more of the Ādityas; "mountain-dwelling" (vs. 12), usually of Soma. Since the lexicon of Marut hymns is often tightly limited, this borrowing of attributes is somewhat remarkable. Similarly the cosmogonic acts of spreading out the cosmic realms (vs. 9) and propping apart the two world-halves (vs. 11) are Indra's signature deeds, not otherwise attributed to the Maruts.

It is the first tṛca (vss. 1–3) that is the most problematic, however. It ends (vs. 3c) exactly as the third tṛca ends (9c), and with a variant of the formula found in all three verses of the final tṛca (vss. 10–12), in all cases inviting "the Maruts to drink the soma." But the hymn begins with a paradox (vs. 1), a cow who herself sucks rather than giving suck, a cow identified as the mother of the Maruts and also, in a sharply different animal metaphor, as the draft-horse of their chariots. In the second verse this female figure seems to transform into, or be identified with, Aditi: "the lap of Aditi" is a common phrase. It is this idiom that gives some clue as to the intent of the first two verses. "The lap of Aditi" seems elsewhere to refer to the ritual ground, or some part of it or some vessel associated with it, and soma is prepared or deposited in this lap. The statement that "the gods cause their commandments to be upheld" in this lap is a way of saying that the ritual activities of mortals sacrificing to the gods keep the cosmos functioning, so that, for example, the sun and the moon can be seen. As for the first verse, Pṛśni, the mother of the Maruts, is in a few mysterious passages (notably IV.5.7, 10) also apparently identified with some part of the ritual ground or equipment, and so Aditi (in "the lap of Aditi") and Pṛśni can be superimposed on each other. If "the cow" of verse 1 is the ritual ground (or some part thereof or piece thereon) as Pṛśni, she "sucks" by receiving the oblation, and she is the draft-horse of the Maruts' chariots in providing the occasion for their journey.

The identification of the Maruts' mother with Aditi in the first tṛca and the ascription to them of epithets and activities characteristic of other gods in the rest of the hymn presumably stem from the same motive: to universalize the Maruts and make them a species of All Gods.

1. The cow herself takes suck, the fame-seeking mother of the bounteous Maruts;
   she is yoked as the draft-horse of their chariots,
2. She in whose lap all the gods cause their commandments to be upheld,
   for the sun and moon to be seen.
3. So then do all our bards sing them here, away from (the sacrifice of) the stranger—
   the Maruts to drink the soma.

4. Here it is—this pressed soma. They drink of it—the Maruts,
   and also the self-ruling ones [=Ādityas] and the Aśvins.
5. They drink—Mitra, Aryaman, Varuṇa—of the one purified in a continuous (stream),
   which possesses three seats and grants offspring.
6. And now at pleasure Indra (drinks) of it, of the pressed one with its cows [=milk-mixture];
   early in the morning he will become exhilarated like a Hotar.

7. Have the patrons [=Maruts] grown excited? Like the waters they rush beyond failures,
   the (Maruts) of refined skill.
8. Do I today choose the help of you gods, who are great
   and by nature of wondrous luster?
9. Those who spread all the earthly realms here and the luminous realms of heaven, (I call)
   the Maruts to drink the soma.

10. Just these of refined skill—you, o Maruts—from heaven I now call,
    to drink of this soma.
11. Just these, who propped apart the two world-halves, the Maruts I now call,
    to drink of this soma.
12. Just this, the bullish mountain-dwelling Marut flock, I now call,
    to drink of this soma.

Oldenberg collects the hymns 95–101 into a single group, despite the varying number of verses and the lack of other clear unifying features.

VIII.95 (704) Indra

Tiraścī Āṅgirasa
9 verses: anuṣṭubh, arranged in tṛcas

A simple hymn in which the poet, who names himself in verse 4, both urges Indra to come to the soma sacrifice to enjoy the soma and the words of praise offered to him and exhorts his fellow celebrants to redouble their praises. The most notable feature of the hymn is the last tṛca (vss. 7–9), with its inescapable repetition of the word *śuddhá* "cleansed, washed," applied not merely to the soma but also to its verbal accompaniments, as well as to Indra and the help he will bring. This verb is not a standard part of soma vocabulary: it is used only once in Maṇḍala IX (IX.78.1), where it refers to the washing of the soma plant before its pressing. The verb is in general rare: almost all of its Ṛgvedic attestations are found in the last three verses of this hymn. In the few other occurrences where the nature of the action can be determined, water is the agent, and it is clear that washing is the literal meaning of the verb and the metaphor deployed in this hymn.

1. Like a charioteer (his chariot), the songs have mounted you at the pressings, o you who long for songs.
   In unison they have bellowed to you, Indra, like mothers to their calf.
2. The clear pressed (soma drinks) have roused you hither, o Indra who long for songs.
   Drink of this stalk, Indra: it has been set for you among all (the clans).
3. Drink the soma for exhilaration, Indra, the pressed soma brought by the falcon,
   for you are the lord, the king of each and every clan.

4. Hear the call of Tiraścī, who honors you, Indra.
   Grant fullness of wealth in good heroes and in cows. You are great.
5. (Hear the call of Tiraścī,) who has begotten for you, Indra, a newer, invigorating hymn,
   a visionary thought stemming from a perceptive mind, an age-old vision swollen with truth.
6. Let us praise him—Indra, whom the songs and solemn words have strengthened.
   Seeking to gain them, may we win his many manly powers.

7. Come now! Let us praise Indra the cleansed with a cleansed sāman.
   Him grown strong through cleansed hymns let the cleansed (soma) with its milk-mixture exhilarate.
8. O Indra—cleansed, come here to us; (come) cleansed with cleansed help.
   Cleansed, lay down a foundation of wealth; cleansed, become exhilarated as the one deserving of soma.

9. For, o Indra, cleansed, (you lay down) wealth for us, cleansed, (you lay down) treasures for the pious man.
   Cleansed, you keep smashing obstacles, cleansed, you seek to gain the prize.

VIII.96 (705) Indra (except Maruts 14d, Indra and Bṛhaspati 15)

Tiraścī Āṅgirasa or Dyutāna Māruti
21 verses: triṣṭubh except virāj 4, arranged in tṛcas

A rich and complex hymn containing both glancing references and vivid treatments of several Indra myths. Its parts conform well to the tṛca structure, especially (as often) toward the end. Each of the last four tṛcas (vss. 10–21) has a verbal signature: in verses 10–12 the half-pāda refrain "surely he will take cognizance" (*kuvíd aṅgá védat*); in verses 13–15 the "droplet" (*drapsá*); in verses 16–18 the opening "you then" (*tuvám̐ ha tyád*); in verses 19–21 the definitional "Vṛtra-smiter" (*vṛtrahā́*).

The first tṛca of the hymn (vss. 1–3) sets the stage for the wide-ranging praise of Indra by describing his overwhelming power in three different areas. In verse 1 the powers of nature are subject to him. Verse 2 apparently contains a snatch of the Emuṣa myth, most extensively related in VIII.71. In that myth Indra shoots a boar named Emuṣa through many mountains; here only the mountains and the arrow-shot are mentioned, but the prodigious nature of the unnamed archer's action is clear, and the audience would be aware that this was a boyhood deed of Indra's. In verse 3 Indra's body is described as the site of his powers, both physical and mental.

The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) begins with a summary of his preeminence (vs. 4), but soon moves to the Vṛtra battle (vs. 5) and especially to the Maruts' role in it, a topic that will also occupy the third tṛca. The Maruts appear to be the "formulators" (*brahmáns*) introduced at the end of verse 5, bellowing to Indra. Verses 6–9 are best interpreted as the direct speech of the Maruts to Indra, offering him their praise while seeking an alliance with him. They remind him (vs. 7) that they stuck and continue to stick by him when the other gods deserted him in the Vṛtra battle, and they put in their claim to share the sacrifice with him (vs. 8), a claim also vividly dramatized in the dialogue hymn I.165. They end their speech (vs. 9) with the reassurance that together they, the Maruts and Indra, will make an unbeatable team.

The next tṛca (vss. 10–12) returns to the ritual present, with the poet's exhortation to himself to produce well-crafted words for Indra—whose attention to the praises he nervously hopes for. The following tṛca (vss. 13–15) is the most puzzling part of the hymn; it concerns an otherwise unknown story about a "droplet" (*drapsá*) or perhaps an individual (human? divine? semi-divine?) so named. There is a conflict of some sort in the Aṃśumatī River, which Indra appears to win in verse 15. The middle verse of the tṛca (vs. 14) is 1st-person direct speech and may be the

words of Indra addressing the Maruts. But the "story" may also be an extended ritual metaphor. "Droplet" is a word also used of soma, and the name of the river means literally "possessing (soma) plants." The descent of the droplet into the river could well describe the rinsing of the soma plant that forms a regular part of soma preparation, although the ritual counterpart of the mythic conflict is difficult to identify.

Unified by its opening words "you then," the next tṛca (vss. 16–18) provides a survey of some of Indra's great deeds, some obscure (like the rivalry with the unidentified seven in vs. 16), some familiar: the defeat of Śuṣṇa (17c), the release of the cows from Vala (17d), and the Vṛtra battle again (18). The last tṛca begins with a riddle, though not a very challenging one. The first three pādas of verse 19 give a series of definitional descriptors of a hero. Those asked the riddle give their answer to "the other," in our opinion the riddler himself: "That's the Vṛtra-smiter!" And they provide other embellishments to the Vṛtra-smiter in the following two verses (20–21), while declaring the need to invoke and praise him. The hymn thus keeps returning to the Vṛtra battle, and the final three verses implicitly assert that Vṛtra-smiter is Indra's fundamental role.

1. For him do the dawns pass along their course; for Indra do the eloquent evenings (pass along their course) by night.
   For him do the waters, the seven mothers, stand still—the rivers easy to cross, for men to traverse.
2. They were pierced through by the archer, though he wavered—the thrice seven backs of the mountains fitted firmly together.
   No god nor mortal could surpass this—(the deeds) that the bull, grown strong, performed.
3. The metal mace is an appendage of Indra; greatest power is in the two arms of Indra.
   The intentions of Indra are in his head exclusively; into his mouth they rush en masse, to (become speech) worthy to be heard.

4. I consider you the most worthy of the sacrifice of those worthy of the sacrifice; I consider you the stirrer of the unstirrable;
   I consider you the beacon of warriors, Indra; I consider you the bull of the settled domains.
5. When, o Indra, in your two arms you took the mace stirred by exhilaration, to smite the serpent,
   the mountains bellowed forth, and forth the cows, forth the formulators [=Maruts] approaching Indra.
6. [Maruts:] "Let us praise him, who begat all these creatures here below him.
   We would like to establish an alliance with Indra with our hymns; we would come near the bull with reverences."

7. [Maruts:] "Shrinking from the hissing of Vṛtra, all the gods who were your partners deserted you.
   Let your partnership be with the Maruts, Indra. Then you will win all these battles here."
8. [Maruts:] "We, the thrice sixty Maruts, having increased you as ruddy throngs [=herds of cattle] increase, are deserving of the sacrifice.
   We reverently approach you. Make a share for us. We would honor your unbridled force with this oblation."
9. [Maruts:] "Sharp is the weapon, the vanguard of the Maruts. (And) who dares venture against your mace, Indra?
   The lords lacking gods are weapon-less. With your wheel [=discus?] scatter them, possessor of the silvery drink."

10. For the great, strong, powerful one, for the one most propitious to cattle send forth a well-twisted (hymn).
    Produce many hymns for Indra whose vehicle is songs, for his body. Surely he will take cognizance (of them)?
11. To him whose vehicle is hymns, to the far-ranging one send an inspired thought like (a boat) to the far shore of rivers with a wooden (paddle).
    Stroke the body of the famous, very enjoyable one with a visionary thought. Surely he will take cognizance (of it)?
12. Labor at what Indra will enjoy from you. Give as praise a good praise hymn. Seek to entice him here with reverence.
    Be attentive, singer. Don't screech, but make your speech heard. Surely he will take cognizance (of it)?

13. The Droplet descended into the Aṃśumatī (River), the black one speeding with the ten thousand.
    Indra with his skill helped him as he blew. The manly minded one repelled the "blizzards" (of attacking warriors?).
14. "I saw the Droplet wandering in the oscillating eddy of the Aṃśumatī River,
    descending like a black cloud. I dispatch you, bulls. Fight in the contest."
15. Then the Droplet held his body in the lap of the Aṃśumatī, as he glittered.
    With Bṛhaspati as yokemate, Indra overcame the godless clans as they attacked.

16. You then—just as you were being born, you became the rival to the seven unrivaled ones, Indra.
    You discovered heaven and earth, which were hidden. You provided joy to the wide-ranging creatures.

17. You then—emboldened, you smote the power without counterpart with your mace, mace-bearer.
You brought low (the power) of Śuṣṇa with your murderous weapons. You found the cows just with your skill, Indra.
18. You then—bull of the settled domains, you became the forceful bane of obstacles.
You released the rivers, which had been blocked. You conquered the waters whose husband was a Dāsa.

19. "He is the very resolute one, who is the enjoyer of the pressings, to whom the battle-fury has been conceded, who is like a rich man through (all) the days,
who all alone is the performer of manly labors." "That's the Vṛtra-smiter!" they respond to the other.
20. That's the Vṛtra-smiter—Indra, sustainer of the settled domains. Him who is to be invoked would we invoke with a lovely praise hymn.
He is our bounteous helper, our advocate. He is the giver of the prize deserving of fame.
21. That's the Vṛtra-smiter—Indra, the master of the Ṛbhus. As soon as he was born, he became one to be invoked.
Performing many manly labors, like soma when drunk he is to be invoked by his comrades.

VIII.97 (706) Indra

Rebha Kāśyapa
15 verses: bṛhatī 1–9, atijagatī 10, upariṣṭādbṛhatī 11–12, atijagatī 13, triṣṭubh 14, jagatī 15, arranged in tṛcas

Though metrically complex and metrically disturbed, this hymn follows a familiar thematic pattern, with its contents structured by the tṛca division. In the first tṛca (vss. 1–3) the poet asks Indra to take possession of wealth belonging to other human lords, who do not follow proper ritual behavior, and to redistribute it to the ritualists of the poet's own group. The next tṛca (vss. 4–6), as often, calls on Indra to come to the sacrifice from wherever he happens to be. The hope for Indra's exclusive company and the fear that he might not come at all are balanced in the third tṛca (vss. 7–9). This tṛca has an unusual structure, with the first and last pādas of each verse identical, a type of very tight ring-composition.

Only in the following tṛca (vss. 10–12) does the poet turn to formal praise of the god (though vs. 9 serves as a transition), but these verses function almost as much as a praise of the praisers themselves. In verse 11 the mockingly designated "raspers" (*rebhá*), that is, the singers, especially the poet himself, whom the Anukramaṇī identifies as Rebha, make Indra strong through their praise. More strikingly, in verse 12 the poets "bend the felly" of his chariot just by looking at it, and make Indra himself bow by their words; the point is surely that they thereby make Indra change the course of his journey and come to the sacrifice. In verse 10 an unidentified group both fashions and begets Indra; given the agents of the following verses, it is very tempting to assume that Rebha intends us to understand that it is the poets who fashioned and begot Indra (although the gods themselves, mentioned at the end of the previous verse, could also be the subject). In the last tṛca the poet combines praise of Indra's immense power with pleas for him to use it for our benefit.

1. The delights that you, the possessor of the sun, brought here from the (other) lords, o Indra,
from that strengthen only your praiser, bounteous one, and those who have twisted the ritual grass for you.
2. What you have appropriated, Indra—the horse, the cow, and the ovine portion—
confer that on the one who sacrifices, presses, and offers priestly gifts—not on the niggard.
3. He who slumbers sleepily not following the commandments, not following the gods, o Indra,
through his own activities he will hinder his wealth from prospering. Put him far away from it.

4. Whether, able one, you are in the distance, whether nearby, Vṛtra-smiter,
from there he who has pressed soma seeks to attract you, Indra, with hymns as hairy-maned (horses) on heaven's way.
5. Or whether you are in the luminous realm of heaven or on the surface of the sea,
whether in an earthly seat, best smiter of Vṛtra, whether in the midspace—come here!
6. When our soma drinks are pressed, o soma-drinker, lord of power,
bring yourself to exhilaration—with your liberal generosity, Indra, with wealth in profusion.

7. Don't shun us, Indra. Become our feasting companion.
You—be there with help for us; just you—be friendship for us. Don't shun us, Indra.
8. Among us, Indra, at our pressing, sit down to drink the honey.
Produce great help for the singer, bounteous one—among us, Indra, at our pressing.
9. The gods have not attained you, nor mortals, o possessor of the stone.
You dominate all created things with your vast power. The gods have not attained you.

10. The superior man who is even more dominant over all battles—Indra have they jointly fashioned and begotten for ruling—
most excellent in resolve and a hindrance in obstructing, strong, strongest, powerful, surpassing.

11. The "raspers" have cried out in unison to him, to Indra to drink of the soma,
so as to increase him, the lord of the sun. For he of steadfast commandments is united with strength and with help.
12. The inspired poets bend the felly just with their gaze and bow the ram [=Indra] with their cry.
Very bright, without deceit, along with your versifiers they (cry out) close to the ear of the surpassing one.

13. I constantly call on this Indra, bounteous, strong, unrepulsable, deploying his own powers in every way.
If the most munificent one, worthy of the sacrifice, will turn here because of our hymns, let the mace-bearer make all our pathways easy for wealth.
14. You, o Indra, perceive how to utterly destroy the strongholds with your strength, most powerful, able one.
In fear of you, mace-bearer, do all the worlds and both heaven and earth tremble.
15. Indra, brilliant champion, let this truth be protective for me. Carry us across manifold difficulties, as if across the waters.
When, King Indra, would you show us the favor of wealth, to be eagerly sought like the distillate of all mother's milk?

VIII.98 (707) Indra

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
12 verses: uṣṇih, except kakubh 7, 10–11, puraüṣṇih 9, 12, arranged in tṛcas.

Although the hymn is composed in three different meters, each of the three meters consists of two pādas of eight syllables and one of twelve, just differently arranged, so that the hymn is more formally unified than the bare metrical synopsis suggests. It is arranged in tṛcas, but not all the tṛcas show unity of form or content. The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) has a four-syllable refrain, and each verse of the last (vss. 10–12) begins with a form of "you" and contains the vocative "you of a hundred resolves," though not always in the same position. Otherwise there are no clear formal marks.

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with an exhortation to the ritualists to sing to Indra, and the second tṛca begins (vs. 4) with a complementary request to Indra to come to the sacrifice, but most of the rest of the first six verses is devoted to generalized praise of Indra. In the third tṛca (vss. 7–9) the ritualists mobilize their verbal resources to strengthen Indra and bring him to the sacrifice, and in the last tṛca (vss. 10–12), as usual, the poet then states our requests, here for battle strength and fighting heroes rather than wealth.

1. To Indra sing a sāman, a lofty one to the lofty inspired poet,
to the creator of the foundations, who is attentive to poetic inspiration, inviting admiration.
2. You, Indra, are the dominator; you caused the sun to shine.
Accomplishing all deeds, controlling all the gods, you are great.
3. Flashing forth (like) the sun with its light, you went to the luminous realm of heaven.
The gods yielded themselves to partnership with you, Indra.

4. Come here to us, Indra, as the dear, entirely victorious one, who cannot be concealed,
broad on all sides like a mountain—as lord of heaven.
5. For, you real drinker of soma, you dominate both world-halves.
Indra, you are the strengthener of the soma-presser—as lord of heaven.
6. For you, Indra, are the splitter of each and every stronghold,
the smiter of the Dasyu, the strengthener of Manu—as lord of heaven.

7. For therefore, o Indra who yearns for hymns, we have sent our great desires surging to you
as those who come with waters [=Maruts] do their waters.
8. Like water with its floods, our sacred formulations are strengthening you, o champion,
even though you have already grown strong day by day, o possessor of the stone.
9. With a song they yoke the two fallow bays of the vigorous one to the broad chariot with its broad yoke,
the two conveyors of Indra, yoked by speech.

10. Indra, bring here to us strength and manly power, you unbounded one of a hundred resolves,
bring here a hero victorious in battle.
11. For you are our father, o good one of a hundred resolves, you our mother.
And therefore we beg for your favor.
12. To you who seek the prize do I appeal, you tempestuous much-invoked one of a hundred resolves.
Grant us a mass of good heroes.

VIII.99 (708) Indra

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
8 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

As often, an invitation to the soma sacrifice begins the hymn (vss. 1–2), but it then continues directly to the topic of Indra's giving (vss. 3–4), which often ends hymns. The poet expresses his hope for goods somewhat indirectly, in a curious simile about

getting cooked in the sun (vs. 3) and in the complex negative constructions of verse 4. The references to the same time yesterday (vs. 1) and to the apparent rebirth, that is, the regular rising, of the sun (vs. 3) suggest that the setting is the dawn ritual, when priestly gifts are distributed.

The second half of the hymn (vss. 4–8) is the praise hymn proper, with emphasis on Indra's irresistible might in battle. The changes rung on the root *tṝ* "overcome" as well as the balanced oppositions (of the type "who X-es but is not X-ed") and parallelisms (e.g., the recurrence of *-tar-* agent nouns) give this portion of the hymn a high rhetorical polish.

1. At this time yesterday these fervent men made you drink,
   o mace-bearer.
   Listen here to those whose vehicle is the praise song, Indra; come right up to the good pasture.
2. Become exhilarated, you well-lipped possessor of the fallow bays: we beseech you for this. The ritual adepts attend to you.
   Yours are the utmost claims to fame deserving of hymns at our pressings, o Indra who yearn for song.

3. As those who "get cooked" [=become warm/fervent] share in the sun, they share in all (the goods) of Indra.
   When he [=the Sun?] who has been born before is being born (again) with strength, we direct our thoughts toward goods, as if toward our share.
4. Praise the giver of goods, whose presents are not harmful. The presents of Indra are beneficial.
   He does not take umbrage at the desire of a man who does honor, as he bestirs his mind for giving.

5. O Indra, at the battle-charges you dominate all contenders.
   You are the smiter of maledictions, the begetter, the all-overcomer. Overcome those who seek to overcome.
6. The two "opponents" [=Heaven and Earth] follow after your gusting in its headlong rush, like two parents after their child.
   All contenders go slack before your battle fury, when you overcome Vṛtra, Indra.

7. For you (people) (we invoke) the one with enduring help, the unaging driver who cannot be driven,
   the swift victor, impeller, best of charioteers, the strengthener of the Tugryas who cannot be overcome—
8. The one who sets right but needs no setting right, made by might, of a hundred forms of help and a hundred resolves,
   common (to all)—Indra do we invoke for help, the possessor of goods, speeder of goods.

VIII.100 (709) Indra (1–9, 12), Vāc (10–11)

Nema Bhārgava (1–3, 6–12), Indra (4–5)
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6, anuṣṭubh 7–9

A vivid but baffling hymn, consisting in great part of snatches of dialogue or direct speech that may or may not be connected with each other. Needless to say, it has been much discussed and disagreed upon, and our own interpretation of it is not entirely secure.

The first two verses are a brief dialogue between an unidentified speaker and his addressee, Indra. The first speaker demands that Indra obtain a portion of the sacrifice for him before he will assist Indra in his deeds (vs. 1). In verse 2 Indra promises him the soma and proposes an active partnership. The first speaker has been variously identified, but we are in agreement with Oldenberg (*Noten* ad loc.), inter alia, that it is Vāyu, the god who along with Indra receives the first soma-offering at the soma sacrifice. (The word *ágre* "at the beginning" in vs. 2 gives strong support to this view.)

Thus we seem to have embarked, in *mythical* time, on the *ritual* day of real time. Such blending of mythical and current ritual time is not uncommon. And, in our view, what happens next, in the next snatch of dialogue (vss. 3–6), is the emergence of the real-time ritualist. A singer (who may, or may not, be named Śarabha [vs. 6]), addresses his colleagues (vs. 3), urging them to praise Indra, even as he raises doubts about Indra's existence—doubts that Indra counters directly (vs. 4) by his epiphany and self-praise. The scene has shifted from the mythical dialogue between Indra and Vāyu to the ritual dialogue between Indra and the singer.

Indra continues to speak in verse 5, though the contents of the speech are rather unclear. In our view the verse concerns the relationship between Indra and the Maruts, often called Indra's "companions" (*sákhāyaḥ*) as here, and the verse is here both because of the progress of the ritual day and because of an association of ideas with verses 1–2. The second or Midday Pressing of the soma sacrifice is dedicated to Indra and the Maruts, but the Maruts' share of the pressing was only established mythically when they reminded Indra of their help to him in the Vṛtra battle and demanded from him a share in the soma—a scene effectively dramatized in the famous hymn I.165. Thus, we have moved from the Morning Pressing with Indra and Vāyu to the Midday Pressing with Indra and the Maruts, and the covert thematic connection is that both Vāyu and the Maruts demanded a share of the sacrifice from Indra. What makes the mental association even more complex is the fact that in verse 5 Indra remains in dialogue with the singer, while remembering and recounting to the singer his side of a dialogue with the Maruts. In any case the singer is now convinced of Indra's reality and declares that Indra's deeds are to be praised.

The following three verses (7–9) in dimeter meter (as opposed to the trimeter meter of the rest of the hymn) are in our opinion the contents of the singer's praise hymn to Indra, highlighting the Vṛtra battle (vss. 7 and 9) and the falcon's theft of soma for Indra (vs. 8). But, not surprisingly, the narration is far from straightforward. Most strikingly, in verse 7 there is a further layer of ventriloquism: in this verse the singer imitates the speech of yet another speaker, a witness or participant in the Vṛtra battle, urging the waters, freed by Indra's slaying of Vṛtra, to flow forth. The speaker whom the singer is quoting might be Indra, speaking of himself in the 3rd person or perhaps the Maruts. But in either case we the audience are three levels down: we are listening to the hymn's poet (supposedly Nema Bhārgava) imitating an unnamed singer in dialogue with Indra, and the singer is in turn imitating Indra or some other eyewitness of the mythical scene. The following verse (8) returns to straight narration, of the falcon's flight with the soma. In verse 9 we are back to the Vṛtra battle, but notably the description is in the present tense, as if still from the point of view of an eyewitness, and it depicts a curious, indeed unprecedented episode, Indra's mace lying covered with water—a scene that reminds us of the dead Vṛtra, who is famously described as lying defeated with the waters streaming over him in I.32.8, 10.

As complex and uncertain as our reading of these first nine verses is, the following two verses (10–11) are considerably more mystifying. It is not that the language or the content is difficult in itself; the verses concern the goddess Speech (Vāc) and present the common image of Speech as a milk-cow (vss. 10–11) and the common theme of the four divisions of speech (vs. 10). The perplexing part is why Vāc should make her appearance at this point in the hymn. The best answer to this question was given by Oldenberg well over a century ago (1885): he cited a story in later Vedic prose (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa IV.1.3) relating a dispute between Indra and Vāyu after the Vṛtra battle. Vāyu, as the swiftest god, was sent to make certain that Vṛtra was dead, and he was rewarded with the first offering. Indra wanted a share of it (thus the opposite of the issue in our first two verses) and promised Vāyu in return that speech would be intelligible. The two gods then wrangled over their proper shares, and Indra received only a quarter, not the half he was expecting. Therefore he decreed that only a quarter of speech would be intelligible. The details of the story match in many ways those in the two verses in question, and it may well be that with these verses we return to the beginning of our hymn and the bargaining between Vāyu and Indra, in a sort of thematic ring composition. However, the Brāhmaṇa story is narratively confused and, as just noted, assigns the roles of petitioner and share-giver exactly opposite. It could therefore also be an after-the-fact attempt to rationalize the peculiarities of this part of the Ṛgvedic hymn. We reserve judgment, and also point out that the cow in association with speech is celebrated at the end of the next hymn (VIII.101.15–16).

And then there is the final verse, addressed to Viṣṇu and echoing the first two verses verbally: the initial vocative "comrade" matches Indra's offer of comradeship to Vāyu in verse 2c, and the promise "we two will smite Vṛtra [/the obstacle]" matches the almost identical phrase in 2d "we two will keep smashing obstacles." The close similarity of these verses led Geldner to assume that Viṣṇu is the speaker in verse 1, not Vāyu. In our opinion this assumption is unnecessary. We think rather that the final verse is an attempt to identify Viṣṇu with Vāyu, or to transform the older god Vāyu (who has a good Indo-Iranian pedigree) into the emergent and increasingly important god Viṣṇu, whose roots are not so deep.

Like many late Ṛgvedic hymns, the difficulties here lie not in the language or the imagery, as is the case in earlier hymns. A major question in this hymn is what ties all the parts together. If we are correct that the first nine verses mark the progress from the morning to the midday rituals, via the gods (Vāyu, Maruts) associated with Indra at those occasions and their negotiations with Indra about their sacrificial share, *and* if Oldenberg is correct that the verses concerning Speech (vss. 10–11) conceal the story about the dispute between Indra and Vāyu after the Vṛtra slaying, then we confront two different and superficially contradictory possibilities of hymnic unity. On the one hand, it may be a *ritual* unity—the progress of the ritual day—but then the Speech part awkwardly returns us to the beginning of the day. Or it may be a *mythological* unity, with the Vṛtra battle viewed from different angles by different participants—but this leaves the ritual real time, with the prominent role of the singer, out of consideration. It is possible, but extremely speculative, that the final Viṣṇu verse gives us a way to reconcile these two approaches. As we have noted frequently elsewhere, the Third Pressing of the soma sacrifice was most likely a ritual innovation, slowly adopted by various clans at different times through the Ṛgvedic period and after. Viṣṇu's most famous deed, the most prominent theme associated with him in the Ṛgveda, is the cosmogonic taking of "three strides," which define and measure out the three worlds. It is possible that because of his association of "three," the introduction of Viṣṇu at the end of this hymn brings us to the end of the new *ritual* day, to the Third Pressing, while maintaining the *mythic* focus on the Vṛtra slaying.

We do not claim to have solved the manifold difficulties of this hymn, but we hope that readers can still enjoy and respond to the intense directness of the dialogues and the stimulating if destabilizing rapidity of the transitions from one vignette to another.

1. [Vāyu:] "Here I go with my body before you. All the gods advance
   toward me from behind.
   When you will have secured a portion for me, Indra, only after that will
   you perform manly deeds along with me."

2. [Indra:] "I establish a draught of the honey for you at the beginning (of the sacrifice). Let the pressed soma be established as your portion,
and you will be my comrade on my right side. Then we two will keep smashing obstacles in abundance."
3. [Singer:] "Proffer praise as you all seek the prize—real praise to Indra, if he is the real thing.
'Indra does not exist,' so says many a one. 'Who has seen him? Whom shall we praise?'"
4. [Indra:] "Here I am, singer: see me here. I dominate all created things with my greatness.
The instructions of truth [=hymns] strengthen me. As the one who keeps breaking open (Vala), I keep breaking the worlds.
5. [Indra:] "When the trackers of truth mounted to me, sitting alone on the back of the delightful one [=fallow bay/soma?],
my mind just responded from the heart: 'My comrades have cried out (to me) like children.'"
6. [Singer:] "All these (deeds) of yours are to be proclaimed at the pressings, those which you did, bounteous Indra, for the presser—
when you uncovered the goods, stemming from afar, brought together by many, for Śarabha of seers' lineage."

7. [Singer:] "'Now, (waters,) run forth each separately: he who obstructed you is not here.
Indra has let fly his mace down onto Vṛtra's mortal place.'
8. [Singer:] "Going at the speed of thought, it crossed the metal stronghold [=sky?].
The fine-feathered (falcon), having gone to heaven, brought the soma to the mace-bearer.
9. [Singer:] "Within the sea it lies—the mace covered over with water.
Streaming forth in front continuously, they [=waters] bring it tribute."

10. When Speech, saying indistinguishable things, sat down as gladdening ruler of the gods,
she milked out in four (streams) nourishment and milk drinks. Where indeed did the highest of hers go?
11. The gods begat goddess Speech. The beasts of all forms speak her.
Gladdening, milking out refreshment and nourishment for us, let Speech, the milk-cow, come well praised to us.

12. Comrade Viṣṇu, stride out widely. Heaven, grant a place for the mace to prop apart.
We two will smite Vṛtra; we two will give leave to the rivers. Let them, unleashed, go at the impetus of Indra.

VIII.101 (710) Various Gods: Mitra and Varuṇa (1–5c), Ādityas (5d-6), Aśvins (7–8), Vāyu (9–10), Sūrya (11–12), Uṣas (or Praise of the Sun's Radiance) (13), Pavamāna (14), Cow (15–16)

Jamadagni Bhārgava
16 verses: bṛhatī 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13; satobṛhatī 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12; gāyatrī 3; triṣṭubh 14–16, arranged (for the most part) in pragāthas.

As the above summary of the deities and the meters demonstrates, this hymn is structurally quite complex, and indeed it may consist of several original hymns. (See Oldenberg 1888: 218 n. 1.) The divisions we see are somewhat at variance with the Anukramaṇī's analysis. The first six verses appear to belong together, with two pragāthas (vss. 1–4) to Mitra and Varuṇa and a third (vss. 5–6) expanding to include the Ādityas in general, the three best known (Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman) named and the rest subsumed under the title "kings." The focus is on the gods' journey to the sacrifice and the praise presented to them there, save for the second pragātha (vss. 3–4), which gives a notable description of Mitra and Varuṇa's missile and the threat it poses.

There follow a pragātha to the Aśvins (vss. 7–8) and one to Vāyu (vss. 9–10), focused even more strongly on their journeys to the sacrifice. The following pragātha to the Sun (vss. 11–12) contains some of the most flat-footed verses in the Ṛgveda; it is hard to tell whether the poet's inspiration gave out, or if there is some deeper purpose that escapes the modern reader.

In our opinion the praise of divinities stops here, and the remainder of the hymn (vss. 13–16) depicts the ritual moment. In verse 13 an oblation of butter or some other milk product is poured into the fire by the priests; verse 14 (the most difficult verse in the hymn) appears to concern the offering of soma. The final two verses (15–16) exalt the cow, who appeared briefly in verse 13, in the most extravagant terms, as kin to major groups of gods, source of immortality, and a goddess associated with speech. This association (vs. 16) reminds us of the somewhat intrusive presence of the goddess Speech as a milk-cow at the end of the immediately preceding hymn (VIII.100.10–11).

1. That mortal has labored just so for the conclave of the gods, each one by one,
who has now brought Mitra and Varuṇa here for their preeminence, for our giving of oblations.
2. The two possessing highest dominion and broad vision, superior men, kings of longest fame,
with their wondrous skill as if with their arm-strength they drive their chariot, together with the rays [/reins] of the sun.

3. Who ran forth as your quick messenger, o Mitra and Varuṇa,
copper-headed, hasty in his exuberance,

4. Who does not come to rest to negotiate, nor to be called back, nor to come to agreement—
   from collision with that one deliver us today, deliver us with your two arms.

5. (Sing) forth for Mitra, forth for Aryaman, o you rich in truth,
   a speech, a companionable, pleasurable, protective praise song—sing to Varuṇa, to the kings.
6. They rouse their own ruddy, noble treasure, the single son of the three (mothers) [=Agni].
   They, undeceivable, watch over the immortal foundations for mortals.

7. (Drive) here to my upraised speeches, the most brilliant ones that are to be performed—
   drive, Nāsatyas, both of one accord, to make tracks toward the oblations.
8. When we call to you for your giving without animus, you two rich in prize mares,
   come, advancing the advancing ritual offering, you superior men, as you are sung by Jamadagni.

9. Drive here to our sacrifice that touches heaven, Vāyu, with the well-disposed (gods).
   (The one soma drink) within the sieve above is being mixed; this pure (soma) here has been held out to you.
10. The Adhvaryu pursues (you) along the straightest paths, (for you) to receive the oblations.
    Then, teamster, drink of both of ours—the pure soma and the one mixed with milk.

11. Yes indeed! you are great, Sūrya; yes indeed! Āditya, you are great.
    The greatness of you who are great attracts admiration. Certainly, god, you are great.
12. Yes indeed! Sūrya, you are great in fame; in every way, god, you are great.
    Because of his greatness the lordly one was set in front for the gods, as the extensive undeceivable light.

13. Here is the one [=butter offering] who is heading downward, accompanied by chants, her form created by a ruddy (cow).
    Like brilliant (Dawn) she has appeared opposite, coming hither within the ten arms.
14. Three offspring [=soma-drinks/pressings] have made their traversal (of the filter); the others have settled down around the chant.
    Loftily he has stood among the creatures; the self-purifying (soma) has entered within the golden (flames).

15. Mother of the Rudras, daughter of the Vasus, sister of the Ādityas, navel of immortality—
    I now proclaim to observant people: do not smite the blameless cow—Aditi.
16. Knowing speech, rousing speech, reverently approaching with all visionary thoughts,
    the goddess, coming hither from the gods, the cow—*let not a small-witted mortal appropriate me.

The final group of hymns consists of 102–103, dedicated to Agni.

VIII.102 (711) Agni

Prayoga Bhārgava or Agni Pāvaka Bārhaspatya or Agni Gṛhapati Sahasaḥ Sūnu and Agni Yaviṣṭha Sahasaḥ Sūnu (together or one or the other)
22 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

For most of its length, this hymn is a conventional treatment of Agni's ritual activities, but with particular stress on his role as *kaví* "poet" or "sage poet" (vss. 1, 5, 17, 18). In general there is little internal unity in the tṛcas, and indeed the third tṛca (vss. 7–9) is particularly disjointed, making a false start with two unconnected sentence fragments (vs. 7), followed by a purpose clause with no main clause (vs. 8). However, the second tṛca (vss. 4–6) has a refrain, and a curious one at that: "Agni, whose garment is the sea." This description probably references several different Agni themes: his identification and ultimate merging with Apām Napāt "Child of the Waters" (see esp. II.35); the myth about Agni's flight from his ritual duties, in which he hides in the waters; and the sprinkling of the fire with consecrated water in the Agnihotra, a ritual action also referred to in verse 14, where the associated act of laying ritual grass around the fire is also mentioned. Verse 14 may also recall Agni's flight and his concealment in the waters.

The conventional hymn appears to end with the sixth tṛca (vss. 16–18), solemnly treating the generation and installation of Agni as the conveyor of both the gods and the oblations. The next tṛca (vss. 19–21) has a light and self-deprecating tone. The poet claims to have neither of the barebones requisites for even a simple offering to Agni, a cow for the oblation and wood to feed his flames (vs. 19). All he has is "something like this"—namely the hymn he has just produced. This is clearly false modesty, and indeed the poet treats the standard wood and ghee rather slightingly in the next two verses (20–21). In the final appended verse (22, not part of a tṛca), he proudly pronounces that a man should kindle Agni with his mind and his vision (not, the implication is, with mere wood and ghee), and indeed that he has just done so.

1. You, Agni, establish lofty vitality for your pious server, god,
as sage poet, houselord, youth.
2. Along with the one [=offering ladle] who reverently invokes the gods,
who offers friendship to them, o far-radiant Agni,
as observant one, convey them here to us.
3. With you as best inciting yokemate, o youngest one,
we become dominant to win the prize.

4. Like Aurva and Bhṛgu, like Apnavāna, I call upon the gleaming one,
upon Agni, whose garment is the sea.
5. I call upon the sage poet, whose rush is the wind's, upon his might,
whose roar is thunder's,
upon Agni, whose garment is the sea.
6. As if upon the stimulus of Savitar, upon the benefit of Bhaga,
I call upon
Agni, whose garment is the sea.

7. Toward Agni, the strengthening one, best of many for your
ceremonies...
for the mighty child (of might)...
8. So that this (Agni) here will be at hand for us, as Tvaṣṭar is at hand for
the forms to be crafted,
with his will—the will of this glorious one...
9. This Agni here is master over all the splendors among the gods.
He will come near to us here with prizes.

10. Praise here the most glorious of all Hotars,
Agni, foremost at the sacrifices,
11. Sharp, pure-flamed, who shines preeminent in the houses,
of longest fame.
12. Sing him, o poet, like a winning steed, the tempestuous one,
who arranges the peoples in their places, like Mitra.

13. Those akin [=waters?], constantly directing to you the hymns of him
who prepares the oblation,
have approached you in front of Vāyu.
14. Whose ritual grass still stands uncut, not yet triply bundled—
even his footprint you waters have deposited.
15. The footprint of the generous god, with his unassailable forms of help, is
an auspicious sight, like the sun.

16. O god Agni, heating up with your flame through visions of ghee,
convey the gods hither and sacrifice to them.
17. The mothers, the gods begot you, the sage poet, o Aṅgiras,
as immortal conveyor of the oblation.

18. You, o sage Agni, a discerning messenger worthy to be chosen,
have they installed as conveyor of the oblation.

19. Because I have no cow, nor an axe in a wooden (tree),
I therefore bring just a thing like this to you.
20. When, Agni, we set any pieces of wood whatsoever in you,
enjoy them, youngest one.
21. What the little termite eats, what the ant creeps over,
let all that be ghee for you.

22. Kindling Agni with his mind, the mortal should follow his visionary
thought.
I have kindled Agni with the dawning lights.

VIII.103 (712) Agni (1–13), Agni and the Maruts (14)

Sobhari Kāṇva
14 verses: bṛhatī 1–4, 6; virāḍrūpā 5; satobṛhatī 7, 9, 11, 13; kakubh 8, 12; gāyatrī 10; anuṣṭubh 14. One tṛca (1–3), 5 pragāthas (4–13), final verse (14).

Another metrically complex hymn, consisting mostly of pragāthas in various combinations of meters, but beginning with a tṛca (vss. 1–3) and ending with a single verse (14). Proferes (2007: 38–40) argues that the opening tṛca concerns the forging of a unified power from multiple clans by commitment to their mutually worshiped fire, which is identified as belonging to Divodāsa, the great Bharata leader (vs. 2). The territorial expansion and the overcoming of other populations therein are treated in verses 2–3.

Though the pragātha that follows (vss. 4–5) does not explicitly continue the theme of victory through centralized leadership, it does promise rewards to the man who devotes himself to Agni—particularly the renowned "imperishable fame" (*ákṣiti śrávaḥ*, vs. 5), a phrase whose Indo-European antiquity has been known and discussed for a century and a half. And "heroic glory" (*vīrávad yáśaḥ*, vs. 9), as well as goods and protection, are the rewards for service to Agni in the following pragāthas (vss. 6–11). The final pragātha (vss. 12–13) seeks to avert Agni's anger. In the summary verse (14) the poet names himself and invites Agni to the sacrifice.

1. He has just appeared, the best pathfinder, in whom they have established
the commandments.
Right up to him just born, the increaser of the Ārya, to Agni have our
hymns reached.
2. The Fire allied to Divodāsa (has gone) forth, as if (all the way) to the
gods with his might.
He has unrolled himself along Mother Earth; he has taken his stand on
the back of the firmament.

3. Before whom the communities tremble, as he performs (deeds) to be constantly acclaimed,
the one who by himself wins thousands as if at the winning of wisdom—serve Agni with insightful thoughts.

4. The mortal whom you wish to lead forward for wealth, who does pious service for you, good one,
he acquires a hero who proclaims solemn speech, who fosters a thousand by himself, o Agni.
5. With a steed he bores through to the prize even in the stronghold; he acquires imperishable fame.
In you among the gods might we always acquire all things of value, o you of many goods.

6. He who distributes all goods, the gladdening Hotar of the peoples—
like the cups of honey that go first to him, the praises go forth to Agni.
7. Those of good gifts, seeking the gods, groom (you), the charioteer (of the ceremonies), like a horse, with hymns.
Deliver both our progeny and our posterity (to safety), o wondrous clanlord; deliver (to us) the generosity of the bounteous ones.

8. Sing forth to the most munificent one, to truthful, lofty, pure-flamed Agni, o Upastutas.
9. The bounteous one will gain heroic glory (for us)—he who is brilliant when kindled and bepoured.
Surely his benevolence will come here to us anew along with prizes?

10. O Āsāva, praise the dearest of the dear ones, the guest,
Agni, the controller of chariots,
11. The one deserving the sacrifice who at sunrise, as finder of tied-down goods, will turn them hither,
whose waves [=flames] are difficult to cross, like the waves in a torrent, when he seeks to win the prize with his insightful thought.

12. Let the guest not be angry at us, this good Agni, proclaimed by many, who is the good Hotar of good ceremony.
13. And let those not suffer harm who (approach you) with invitations here in sundry ways, o good Agni.
For even a weakling reverently invokes you for a mission if he is a man of good ceremony who has bestowed the oblation.

14. O Agni, drive here, as comrade of the Maruts, along with the Rudras, for soma-drinking.
(Drive) to the good praise of Sobhari. Make yourself euphoric in the presence of Svaṛṇara.